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The
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Drawn by W. R. Leigh.

"Bryan was hoisted upon the shoulders of his followers."

The Manufacturer of History.

Politics

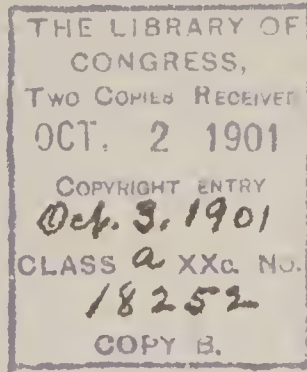


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A MANUFACTURER OF HISTORY

A MANUFACTURER OF HISTORY

*A STORY OF NEWSPAPER AND PO-
LITICAL LIFE*

BY CHARLES WARREN

ROPES was homesick for New York, homesick for every sight, smell, and sound of that splendid heterogeneous, misgoverned city. He longed for the jostling crowds at the City Hall station of the Elevated in the late afternoon; he longed for the electric brilliancy of Broadway when the theatres were emptying and the gay streams of pleasure-seekers were scattering to late suppers or to dances; he longed for a cozy dinner for four on the Claremont piazza on a Sunday afternoon, the river flashing

below in the sun, and the Palisades grim and shadowy opposite; he longed for the superb sweep of the Great Bridge, with its constant movement and distant tumult; for the notched sky-line of the city itself as seen when on some assignment at Staten Island or Jersey City.

And instead of all this he had—what? A ceaseless roll of undulatory prairie, an untidy and pretentious town of confused wooden and brick edifices, a daily visit of the stage from Wawa Station on the Western Atlantic Railroad, the somewhat exasperating and depressing daily contact with a large proportion of the 3,000 inhabitants of the town of Erona, and with their standards, views, and tastes, representative of that Western State which considered itself the pivot of the Union. The town itself was a disappointed place. It had been founded some fifteen years before in a burst of exultation, when it was supposed that the railroad would go through it. It had grown in one year into a place of substantial and more or less dignified importance, and was made the county seat in anticipation of its

glorious future. Then, on account of various engineering difficulties, the railroad officials decided to run their line some distance to the north ; and this change left Erona with the little station of Wawa, twenty miles away, as its nearest railroad connection. There was no town at Wawa, and there never could be ; for the country was desolate and unfertile. The nearest town to Erona was Boscober, thirty miles off to the west. There was nothing to bring any one to Erona itself, except during the sessions of the court, and they occurred only twice a year, in the spring and in the late fall. So the "boom" burst, and the town rapidly grew shiftless in appearance and discouraged in spirit.

William Rawdon Ropes, known by the townspeople of Erona generally as "Blue-eyed Billy" Ropes, had been a reporter in New York upon a well-known newspaper of large circulation. But although he was able and original in his methods, there was in him a streak of weakness, almost of laziness, which prevented him from ever being a man to overcome obstacles. And so after several

years of faithful service, he had tired of the hurry and worry, of the dirt, of the foreign-born, of the competition—of New York, in fact. In November, 1890, he had sent in his resignation, received the pay due to him, and departed for the West.

He had wandered from one place to another, gradually changing his point of view as he went, gradually realizing that New York was not the United States, and thereby becoming himself more of an American. But he had found nothing permanent to do. The West seemed filled with unemployed. His money melted away ; and in exact proportion his ambition decreased. One day he drifted into the town of Erona. And there he stuck. His newspaper experience made him an invaluable addition to the town ; and he soon became a combination of reporter and editor on the "Erona Battle-Cry"; "general utility man," he called himself.

For six years Ropes had been at work, and now he was homesick. He had gone from New York a Democrat. The "Erona Battle-Cry" was a Democratic paper ; but

Ropes hardly recognized his own Democracy in it. When he had left New York, like all Easterners he knew in a dim kind of way that there was in the West a free-silver question. But the East believed that free silver was a wild notion of some few cranks and politicians. Instead, Ropes found that it was the sober conviction of many of the best and most thoughtful men, business men as well as farmers. After some time in Erona he began to understand that "Free Silver" was hardly a financial or political question at all there. It was a religion. Every one believed in it. Even Bothwait's paper, the "Erona Star," which was Republican, was in favor of it.

One of the first tasks set to Ropes was to write a burning "sixteen to one" editorial. He had not protested ; and he was far too well trained a newspaper man not to be capable of writing a most able article in opposition to his own beliefs. So he composed an unimpeachable and fiery editorial that would have done credit to Senator Stewart himself. But, as an Eastern Dem-

ocrat, it rather disgusted him. And he had gone on for six years writing silver editorials, sick at heart.

Sometimes Ropes wondered why he did not pull up stakes and leave the disagreeable task. Then he would look at his bank account, and decide to remain ; although his poverty did not make the taunts flung at him for his Eastern connections any easier to bear. But it is true, also that, as often as he considered breaking away from his surroundings and returning to New York, the great, "limitless West" fever would seize upon him ; and a distaste, almost a fear, of being thrown again into the crowded metropolitan struggle would come over him.

The year 1896 arrived, bringing with it a culmination of the feelings of unrest and bitterness of the Western farmers in the region of Erona, and of their sense of a gross injustice in the existing condition of affairs. Ropes had been so long away from New York that he had almost forgotten the characteristic attitude of the East—disregard for conditions outside itself. And so he was amazed at the utter ignorance shown by

Eastern newspapers of the real facts in the political situation. They treated the silver question as dead. Above all, they failed to understand that the issue which was soon to be made was not merely financial ; but was a social and a sectional one, which had been gradually shaping itself through years of growth, and of which "Free Silver" was the mere battle-cry.

So heated was the feeling in Erona in June, 1896, that Eastern newspapers, owing to their gold tendencies, were not allowed in the town. The few men who still subscribed to New York papers discontinued their subscriptions. Even the weekly religious papers and monthly magazines were dropped and put upon the Erona Index Expurgatorius. "Coin's Financial School" became the Bible, household library, and newspaper in one, in each home. Strangers who alighted from westbound trains at Wawa Station were warned not to bring into the town any obnoxious "Eastern sheets." In some way or other, mail matter directed to citizens of Erona and containing gold documents never reached its destination. Eastern drummers

found it wiser to avoid any topic even remotely connected with the currency question ; and also to pay and to receive pay in silver dollars without comment on their weight or other disagreeable qualities. At the same time, Ropes found that a distinct coldness toward him as an Easterner was becoming prevalent ; and the constant flings made at him were intensely disagreeable. At first he was angry. Then he became desperately homesick for his native city.

The Republican convention met at St. Louis and adopted a gold platform. That same day the "Erona Star" formally repudiated the convention and William McKinley ; and a truce was declared between its editor, Bothwait, and his former consistently bitter enemy, Arkway, the editor of the "Battle-Cry." Soon afterward news came of the great preparation that was being made in the East to carry the Democratic convention also for gold.

And then one night, as Ropes sat in his little office waiting drearily for the forms to be made up, and longing for his old home and his old work, thoroughly embittered by

what he had undergone during the past six years, an idea came to him. It was so great an idea, so audacious, so full of possibilities, that he sat up in his chair with a jerk and breathed hard. He saw the means of obtaining revenge upon a whole community for the mental strain under which it had placed him for so long. The room was close, and smelt of printer's ink and damp paper. He felt that he needed air and open space; and he went out under the starlight into the long, straight, wide street which wandered off in the darkness over the prairie to the horizon.

With the whole scheme, fair or unfair, mean or otherwise, plotted out in his mind, Ropes entered Arkway's office the next morning. "Arkway," he said, "how are you going to do the Chicago convention?"

"Do it like anything," said Arkway.

"How are you going to have it written up?" said Ropes. "Going to depend on the Press Association report, are you?"

"I suppose so," said Arkway; "what else can we do?"

Ropes paused, and screwed his mouth up with a skeptical air. "Well," he said deliberately, tapping his desk with his fingernails, "you won't get any accurate account of things as they really happened. You'll never know from that whether the silver men were treated fairly or not. It's my opinion those gold men mean to carry that convention by fraud, if they can't do it in any other way. And if this is going to be done, we people out here want to know it, don't we?"

Arkway's reply was more emphatic than explicit.

"We don't want any faked-up press despatches written by men in the employ of Wall Street. Now, how are we going to get a straight story of that convention unless we send a man there? What I propose is this: You notify the Press Association that we don't want their stuff about the convention, and that we won't take it. Then send some man on there who'll write you every night a decent, unfaked story. I don't know," he continued, "how much the old sheet can stand. We did a pretty good busi-

ness last year, and can afford to throw the cash around a little. Doesn't it strike you it would boom the paper a great deal in the county if we could have a special ? ”

Arkway whistled. “ Ropes,” he said, “ you've got a great head on you, even if you are an Easterner ; but I don't quite see where the cash is coming from to send a man to Chicago, unless——”

“ Yes ? ” said Ropes.

“ Unless I could get Bothwait to have the ‘ Star ’ join in and divvy on the expense. I believe Bothwait would do it, too. He's hot against Bill McKinley now. I'll talk it over with him. And we'll send you, Ropes, if we send any man. You're just the man, of course. You know all those New Yorkers, and you'll hit them off to life. It's a good scheme, a mighty good scheme.”

Bothwait coincided with Arkway's opinion of the idea. Arrangements were made to exclude all Press Association matter regarding the convention from the columns of both papers ; and due announcement was made that the citizens of Erona and of

Wawa County would have the unusual privilege of reading "unbiased accounts of the Chicago convention from the pen of our esteemed compatriot, William Rawdon Ropes."

This news was a partial recompense to the people of the locality for their great disappointment over the fact that no delegate to the convention had been chosen from that portion of the county. As the county was over 100 miles in length, any notices or telegrams that might come from a delegate elected from the other end of the county would not be likely to reach Erona. So, in return for the generous enterprise of the editors, most of the male citizens signed a subscription paper agreeing to buy the "Star" and the "Battle-Cry," and no other paper, local or foreign, for a month.

On the 1st of July, Ropes started for Chicago amid the cheers of the citizens of Erona. They would probably have been less effusive and more suspicious, if they had known that Ropes had withdrawn the entire amount of his small deposit at the bank, had packed in his trunk all his belongings,

and had presented secretly, under oath of silence, the little furniture that he owned to his good-natured landlady. Just before the departure of the train, Arkway shouted out, "Give us something hot in the reporting line, Billy; plenty of excitement."

As Ropes stood on the back platform of the car, and as Wawa station dropped nearer and nearer the horizon, he laughed out loud, and said to himself: "They'll have all the excitement they want in that town for the next ten days. I've got six years to pay back."

In a few minutes the black blot at the far end of the track dropped out of sight, and there was nothing but prairie. And William Rawdon Ropes walked back into the car, a free man, bound for the East.

On Friday, the 3d of July, Ropes arrived in Chicago. That night, as he stood in the lobby of the Auditorium Hotel, a tall, leader-like-looking man walked briskly to the stairway, and Ropes recognized him at once. It was William C. Whitney. At the sight of a good old New York face once more, Ropes

nearly shouted with pure joy, and he felt almost like rushing up to him and shaking his hand, as a castaway on a desert island flings himself upon his rescuers. One by one others of the determined, but even then hopeless, band of gold leaders who had just come on with Whitney to Chicago went past him—Flower, Grant, and Fellows of New York, Smith of New Jersey, Gray of Delaware, Russell of Massachusetts, and Harrity of Pennsylvania, Francis of Missouri, Faulkner of Georgia, and twenty or thirty others who had been quietly summoned days beforehand by urgent personal letters from Whitney. They were holding a secret meeting in the ill-omened “hoodoo” room in the Auditorium, the famous room where the Tammany delegates four years before had framed their round robin of protest and invective against the nomination of Cleveland. Ropes went over to the silver headquarters at the Sherman House, and found a very much more encouraged set of men there. The silver leaders were confident of victory. Their plans had long been determined upon. This was to be no 1892 over

again. They knew that the rank and file of the delegates were pledged, and that even those unpledged could neither be bought nor argued with, and were entirely to be trusted. No compromise, no concessions—free silver or nothing, that was the sole idea of the leaders. The candidates were immaterial; and on candidates they were divided. The platform was the one essential; and upon that all their efforts were being bent.

When Ropes went to his desk in the writing-room to prepare his telegraphic letter to the “Erona Battle-Cry” and “Star” combination, he sat for some minutes thinking deeply. Then he determined that the effect of his scheme would be heightened by not putting it into effect just yet. He, therefore, wrote out a despatch describing the situation just as he saw it and just as it was.

And so it happened that the readers of the “Erona Battle-Cry” and of the “Erona Star” the next morning, far off in the West, shouted with joy as they read the graphic description in their morning papers, and remarked to each other what a clever

young fellow that Ropes was; and Arkway and Bothwait congratulated themselves upon their enterprise in sending just the right kind of a representative to Chicago.

Fourth of July dawned a fine, clear day, and Ropes saw that the Western delegates and their attendant followers in crowds were already on the ground, while the Easterners and Southerners had hardly begun to arrive. At the Palmer House, masses of excited men were beginning to struggle, and scuffle, and boil up and down the lobby, the corridors, and stairs. Upstairs the various State delegations, wild silver States and solid gold States indiscriminately, had taken their rooms along the wide corridors. Here and there along the narrow hallways could be seen, vigorously and desperately pleading and arguing to impervious listeners, Whitney, Russell, Eckels the Comptroller of the Currency, Everett of Massachusetts, Don Dickinson, and many other of the gold leaders.

The rooms opening upon the stairways and upon the balconies that overlooked the

lobby below were taken by the States having Presidential candidates. In and out of these passed unbroken lines of visitors—partisans, supporters, and foes—all alike eagerly taking the buttons, badges, and campaign literature lavishly distributed by the boomers of each candidate. And above the constant shuffling and tread of the crowd was the dull roar of talk and argument, argument and talk, everywhere, around, above, and benumbing the senses with its constant impression. Lines of pictures of Boies, Bland, Blackburn, and Pennoyer of Oregon were strung everywhere across the lobby, and were stuck upon the pillars and the balustrades. Everywhere in the streets were venders of campaign emblems and buttons with 16 to 1 in every conceivable combination; and the utter hopelessness of the gold cause was in no way more clearly signified than in the almost complete lack of campaign buttons bearing gold leaders' names. That night Ropes attended the great Gold Standard mass meeting in the Auditorium theater. But he realized that it was all a waste of energy; and

that no converts could be made among such earnest silver disciples as those with whom he had lived for the past six years.

On Sunday the representatives of Democracy began to take possession of Chicago in earnest. Every half-hour a distant band announced the arrival of a fresh club or delegation. Among the first to arrive and to fill the streets and hotels with noise was the Bland Silver Club of St. Louis, 500 sturdy silverites in linen suits and caps with "Bland" in silver letters upon them. "Silver Dick, the people's choice," seemed the war-cry all over the hotel portion of the city. Down the street and up, marched men bearing transparencies, "Turn the people loose and let them vote for Bland." Then later in the day the Blackburn Club of Lexington marched in, and the Matthews Club of Indianapolis, the Jacksonian Club of Omaha, and 100 members of the Bryan Club of Lincoln, and last, and unusually quietly, the Tammany Club.

In the middle of the day, Ropes heard that Bland's supporters were claiming half of the delegates. Texas already had voted

to support him. The doubtful factor was the position of the Illinois delegation, which remained silent and quiescent under the thumb of the sphinx-like Altgeld. The pale Illinois governor remained all day at the Sherman House amid a swirling, surging mob, giving no sign of his position or of his preference, but calmly biding his own time. Toward evening the enthusiastic Boies "boomers," "shouters," and "rooters" began to make their presence felt. Boies's stock began to rise with the newspaper men. It was in the air that McLean of Ohio was to have the nomination for Vice-President. Bryan, the young, ambitious Nebraska politician, was being talked of as temporary chairman; for the silver men were so confident that they believed the National Committee itself would seat the silver delegates from Nebraska.

Ropes sat at his own desk, and as he finished each sentence with zest, his face wore broad smiles, showing the pleasure and satisfaction which his work was giving him. The fulfilment of the Great Idea, of the scheme of retaliation upon the Eronites was begin-

ning to take definite shape. He wrote fairly accurate descriptions of the streets and hotels; but every now and then he inserted a few words, the effect of which upon the Eronites he could picture to himself with ease. Then he began to draw upon his imagination for long accounts of events which had never happened. He told his Western readers how Whitney's assiduous work and that of the other Eastern leaders was beginning to tell—how he, Ropes, had met three Alabama and two Texas delegates who were weakening. He threw in a few dark hints as to promises of money and of offers that were disturbing the minds of the Indiana delegates. He described enormous clubs of Eastern business men who were arriving on every train and buttonholing every delegate. He described at length an alleged plan which the gold men on the National Committee had formed to seat a contesting gold delegation from Illinois and thus throw Altgeld out of the convention. This he showed could easily be, and was certain to be, carried out. He worked up an elaborate and exciting account

of a meeting between Altgeld, Stone, Bryan, and Tillman, which, he wrote, he had happened to overhear, and which showed their anxiety over the unreliability of their followers. Then he gave a glowing description of Saturday's gold mass meeting and the number of silver delegates whom it had converted. After filing this in the telegraph office, he went to bed well satisfied; and the smile lingered on his lips even after he fell asleep, as he dreamt of the terrible denunciation which would be heard through the shiftless streets of Erona the next morning.

Monday morning, the leaders seemed to be in seclusion. The National Committee was meeting, and final plans were being laid for the various candidates. Ropes devoted the day to gathering impressions of the personality of the delegates. One fact immediately impressed him as peculiar to this convention. The professional politicians were not in the ascendant here. But the plain, decent, small business men and farmers, hard-worked, and bitter with real and fancied

grievances, had the bit in their teeth and were about to smash all previous political records to atoms.

Conflicting rumors came from all sides. One man told Ropes that Bland was nowhere; the next, that the three "B's" were the only victorious sign—"Bland, Bimetallism, or Bust"; the next, that the labor vote was all going to Boies. In the afternoon the name of Teller came like magic from every one's lips. Newspaper men dashed for the wire, and telegraphed that the convention was apparently drifting to the Colorado statesman. Then came the first, apparently accurate, information that Altgeld was for Bland. That seemed to settle the question, for every candid observer saw that Altgeld was the ruling power in this seething mass.

Ropes flashed over the wires that night a portrayal of the foregoing situation as he saw it. Then with imaginative generosity he presented the gold men with a fictitious gold Illinois delegation alleged by him to have been seated by the National Committee along with the South Dakota, Nebraska,

and Michigan gold delegations, and he laid great stress on the votes of the National Committee as representative of the way in which the convention was going. He stated that already the silver men could rely on but about half the delegates; and on top of all he wrote a sentence which was calculated to strike panic into his readers at the other end of the line. It was as follows: "My Washington correspondent telegraphs me that President Cleveland, four of his cabinet, and J. Pierpont Morgan leave Washington to-night for Chicago, where they will rally the gold forces." He then described a series of bitter fights between the various silver candidates and the threats of each to throw their votes for Pattison or Russell, rather than let the other be nominated; and he stated the great possibility that they would unite, if at all, not upon a Democrat, but upon Stewart of Nevada. Ropes knew that the farmers of Erona hated Stewart, believing him a selfish mine-owner, little better than the mining and railroad stock speculators of the East. All this was written with fine

detail, embellished with all the art of the old and practised newspaper man that he was.

The next morning in Erona great headlines appeared on the bulletin boards. "Traitors in the Ranks." "The Renegade Cleveland Goes to Chicago." Consternation could be seen on the faces of all the local politicians, while Arkway and Bothwait in their editorial columns tried manfully to revivify the failing confidence of their readers. A Boston drummer who arrived on the stage from Wawa Station that afternoon was firmly advised to take the next train onward; and sectional feeling was so intense that Jake McCulloch, the stage-driver, urged Andrews the station-master at lonely Wawa station to warn strangers who alighted there proposing to visit Erona, that it would probably be pleasanter for them to come again later in the season.

Later in the afternoon a ranchman rode over from Boscober, the nearest town, thirty miles away, and seemed surprised at the po-

litical gloom at Erona. He had heard that a letter had been received in his town from a delegate at Chicago in which nothing was said of the discouraging condition of affairs of which Ropes was sending such vivid accounts. "That just shows what a corking good reporter we've got up there," said Jackson Holmes, the district attorney; and Arkway looked pleased, and treated every one to drinks.

The morning of the day of the convention, Tuesday, was again cool and cloudless. The portion of the great hall walled off for the convention, with its 20,000 seats, being but one-third of the whole great building, filled rapidly with spectators. As Ropes sat in his press seat, on all sides rose a gentle incline of packed faces, masses of black and white, back to where the girders of the great roof joined the walls. Down in the center of this great mass was a vacant, oblong, flat space looking like a brown stretch of marsh filled with bulrushes; for from every group of seats allotted to the various delegations

rose a tall rod with a triangular, bright blue tip, bearing the name of the State painted vertically.

Soon the delegates began to straggle in. Whitney came in one of the first, alone, amid little excitement. Blackburn and some silver men got little applause; then Hill came slowly with a group surrounding him, like a general with his staff, and the applause was loud. Senator Jones of Arkansas, stocky and looking like a good fighter, Stone of Missouri, spare and sallow, and Altgeld, white-faced, bent, alert, with pointed black beard and close-cropped hair were in close conference. Russell, the popular young ex-Governor of Massachusetts, was being surrounded by delegates from the Southern States wishing to shake hands and regretting that they could not vote for him.

Amid intense excitement, Harrity, as chairman of the National Committee, called the convention to order at 12:53. The first fight was started by the presentation of Hill's name for temporary chairman; and the expected outbreak came very soon, when

ex-Governor Waller, stern and pugnacious, took the platform. "Will you turn down David B. Hill?" he cried. "We will," shrieked the delegates. Waller stopped, then raising himself and glaring at his audience, he said slowly and with concentrated bitterness: "Turn down Hill, and I'll tell you what we'll do. We will fight you, fight you here and elsewhere for your indignities and insults." Hisses arose from all around, the delegates jumped from their seats, and Ropes thought that violence would follow.

Then Thomas of Colorado, "the tall Pine of the Rockies," spoke calmly and powerfully; and after him others spoke eloquently for the silver side. Colonel Fellows of New York followed, with his grizzled hair, and his benevolent yet austere face looking like that on an old Roman coin. For once, his art and his pathos were in vain. By a vote of 556 to 349 Hill was unseated, and the opposing candidate, the courteous Senator Daniel, looking like a second Edwin Booth, was led to the chair by Senator Jones, and the formal appointing of committees began.

That night, Ropes began to prepare to throw his second bombshell into the peaceful and hopeful town of Erona. While he was seated in the convention that day a telegram had been brought to him. It read: "Send us something encouraging. People of Erona alarmed at silver treachery." He had laughed aloud in pure joy, and crumpled the telegram into his pocket as he thought of the despatch which he would send that evening.

This was the account that Ropes wrote to satisfy the guileless people of Erona in their desire for good news. Beginning with a correct description of the convention hall and the gathering of the clans, he continued: "It is evident that the sympathies of the vast audience are entirely with the gold men. No silver leaders received any applause. The gold delegations from Nebraska and Michigan have been greeted with cheers by their fellow-delegates. It looks as if the Southern silver men were to be pacified by income tax and State-banks planks in the platform." Then he went on to describe the attempt of

the convention to throw down the National Committee candidate for temporary chairman, the exciting debate, wonderful speeches by William C. Whitney and Waller, and finally the very close vote which, he wrote, seated David B. Hill as temporary chairman by a majority of only two—453 to 451. Then he gave an account of a frenzied attempt to reconsider the vote and of the gain of one vote by the gold men on the reconsideration. He pictured the retirement of the beaten silver leaders, pale and anxious, from the convention at its adjournment. Then, just as a sop at the end of his despatch, he stated that the above vote probably did not represent a gold majority, because several silver men had undoubtedly voted for Hill rather than begin the convention in so revolutionary a manner as by overturning all previous precedent. “The most likely man now to be nominated for the Presidency is William E. Russell of Massachusetts. The silver candidate will be either William J. Bryan, who voted for the Populist candidate in 1892, or Teller.”

It was not until five o'clock in the afternoon of Wednesday that the real excitement began, when the Committee on Credentials recommended, by a vote of twenty-seven to sixteen, the unseating of enough of the gold delegates from Nebraska and Michigan to throw the votes of those States for silver and to procure the necessary two-thirds majority. The uproar increased as the dusk came on and the electric lights shone out. Cries of "vote, vote," rose from everywhere.

When the vote was finished, and the result showed for the first time the strength of the silver forces, 558 to 368, the silver tumult began in earnest. Standards were wrenched from their places. Hats, flags, newspapers, handkerchiefs, chairs, flew round in the air. Then the newly seated Nebraska delegation, headed by Bryan, marched in. Senator White was elected permanent chairman, and the disorder ceased only when the convention adjourned late in the night.

Before Ropes sat down at the telegraph desk to prepare his daily despatch, he took a telegram out of his pocket which he had

received that day from the president of the Erona Silver Club. "Citizens of Erona will subscribe two hundred dollars to save the country from ruin and to keep delegates from being bought by gold bugs. Notify Jones."

"They certainly are feeling badly down in Erona," murmured Ropes, and thereupon he wrote the following: "Southern States still weakening. State banks and coinage of seigniorage promised by gold leaders. Action of the convention to-day decisive of the fact that gold men have obtained a majority. Michigan and Nebraska gold delegations seated by vote of 466 to 460. Tremendous excitement followed the announcement of the vote, and in answer to an insult thrown at a Mississippi delegate three delegations assaulted each other. Several men were seriously hurt. The police were called in by temporary chairman Hill. It is believed the gold men intend to have enough silver men arrested to secure them a safe majority. Senator Gray of Delaware was elected permanent chairman, and Senator White, the silver candidate, defeated. It is now evi-

dent that the platform will not be for free silver at sixteen to one. It may still be a compromise. William J. Bryan has been unseated, and is now present merely as a spectator. He is not likely to be even a candidate for the Presidency."

When this telegram was received in Erona, the editors of the "Erona Battle-Cry" and of the "Erona Star" held a consultation to consider the advisability of publishing it. "We'd better get our guns ready and board up the office windows. Who knows what will happen to-morrow morning when the boys read that?" groaned Arkway. "Why doesn't Ropes fake up something, if he can't write better news than this. What's the use of his sending us this stuff, even if it is true?"

Bothwait said bitterly: "What did we send him for, anyway? I thought he had more sense than to write us the gold-bug side. Why doesn't he put on a good bluff, even if things are going wrong? What's he there for?"

After the Eronites had fully digested the contents of the morning papers, their first

impulse was to go down to the offices and shoot the editors, their next was to telegraph to the governor of the State asking him to call a meeting of the legislature preparatory to the secession of the State. Finally, they compromised on calling an impromptu meeting on the court-house steps, where every orator in Erona was given a chance to vent his rage and disgust and to air his views of the situation.

The day that was to decide the future course of the Democratic party, Thursday, July 9th, was again a cool, clear day.

The platform, to frame which the Committee on Resolutions had sat up all night, was read monotonously by Senator Jones. Little excitement followed the reading of the silver resolution, for that was a foregone conclusion. As the succeeding planks, however, were heard, the newspaper men sat in increasing amazement. Even the delegates themselves seemed partially aghast at the new doctrines. Then Hill arose slowly, and read the very shrewd minority amendments to the silver plank. Tillman, the one-eyed, smooth-

shaven, keen-featured Senator from South Carolina, came energetically forward with a bitter attack on the East.

Hill followed him with a powerful, tactful, and effective speech. The audience barely listened to half of it. After Hill, William E. Russell, pale and worn, his ringing voice choked with emotion, made the last speech that he was destined to make in this life—an appeal more in sorrow than in anger against this destruction of the party to whose success he had devoted the work of a crowded lifetime. The utmost silence and attention waited on his few words.

Then a tall, robust, sallow-faced, large-headed man with long black hair came upon the platform, and was greeted with cheers. It was William Jennings Bryan. Few were prepared for what was to follow; but Bryan had come to Chicago with his speech in his pocket, resolved to stake all upon it, and determined to sweep the convention before him, out of his path to the Presidency. As he proceeded, his audience grew more and more excited. When he rolled out, "Why, that man who used to boast that he looked like

Napoleon, that man shudders to-day when he thinks that he was nominated on the anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo," the uproar made it impossible for him to continue. As he described the farmer as the basis of the prosperity of the country, he touched the personal responsive chord in each silver delegate. Ropes, even with all his gold beliefs and affiliations, sat fascinated and impressed, knowing that it was all false, claptrap, wrong, illogical from his standpoint, but held entirely under the spell of the excitement of the scene and the fervor and intensity of the oratory. Amid a painful stillness, the orator finished in tones of slow, solemn protest: "Having behind us the commercial and the laboring interest and all the toiling masses, we shall answer their demands for a gold standard by saying to them, 'You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.' "

There was a pause. Then occurred a wild and hysterical uprising; waves of deafening cheers and yells swept from end to end of the building and back again, unceasing in

their tumult. Delegates stood on chairs, uncontrollable, frenzied. The audience also seemed frantic. A Georgia delegate suddenly tore away the State blue-tipped rod, raised it high aloft, and started to rush toward the Nebraska delegation. Indian Territory raced down to follow him with its stick. Illinois, South Dakota, Missouri, Virginia, Alabama, Kentucky, Ohio, Iowa, Tennessee, Mississippi, Michigan, Utah, Nevada, California followed. A grand procession of State rods and delegates started around the delegates' inclosure. Bryan was hoisted upon the shoulders of his followers and carried with it.

Altgeld, Jones, and others of the Bland leaders were hastily conferring together, looking pale and disturbed. They saw the handwriting on the wall. The convention was evidently stampeded. All the newspaper men were rushing despatches to their home papers stating that Bryan would surely be nominated for President.

It was fully thirty-five minutes before quiet was restored. The platform was car-

ried, 628 to 301, and the old Democratic party had ceased to exist.

In the evening, with a crowd of about 24,000 people present, the nomination of Presidential candidates began. The delegates and the visitors were still hot from Bryan's hammer strokes of the morning. The name of Bryan was on the lips of every one who hurried across the enormous lobby. The animosity shown toward the Eastern man was such that Ropes felt that the slightest pinprick, might produce an explosion. Every one sat nervously waiting the end of the convention, and hoping that actual force and violence might be averted. The feeling was intensified as, during the progress of the roll-call of States, the gold delegations sat sullen in their seats, either omitting in silence to answer the call or stating in bitter words their present position in the convention and the reason why they had no candidate to offer.

Meanwhile, however, the flow of eulogy for the different silver candidates was going on as each silver State was reached in the

roll-call. The confusion and noise made it impossible to hear the speeches. The galleries had become wholly unmanageable. Time and time again the chairman pounded his desk, and the sergeant-at-arms threatened to have them cleared; but the audience in its might simply laughed at him, and at last began calling rhythmically "vote, vote." By this time the Bland leaders were fully convinced that a vote taken then meant Bryan's nomination without question. Their only chance was for delay. Bland had 360 votes, but could he hold them? Finally, after midnight, to the great disappointment of the audience, the convention adjourned and the delegates, thoroughly exhausted in mind and body, drifted back to the city.

That night Ropes was obliged to summon his fullest powers of imagination. This was to be his masterpiece. Although he was not a politician, and although he found it a little difficult to construct a national political platform entirely out of his own head, he finally succeeded in his undertaking; and when he read over that portion of his despatch which

described the platform supposed to have been adopted by the convention that day, he felt that he had a right to be proud of himself. He had just finished describing the speeches upon the platform. He told of Hill's great speech and of Russell's, and of the hisses that greeted Tillman. All mention of Bryan's speech had to be left out, because in a previous despatch he had deposed Bryan from his place as a delegate, and had set him back among the spectators. And then he had proceeded to the composition of the platform. It certainly was a masterpiece. Every doctrine, every idea which he knew to be particularly odious to the people of Erona and of that section of the country he inserted. He gave a plank to a fulsome indorsement of President Cleveland. He indorsed the bond issue. He declared for civil service reform and for pension reform, for a larger army and navy, and, finally, to cap all, for the gold standard. Only at the end did he attempt to salve the feelings of his readers by making a present to them of an income-tax plank.

When the telegram was carried in to Ark-

way and to Bothwait, the effect was like that of a cyclone. Both grabbed their hats and rushed to the telegram office, where they sent off this message: "William R. Ropes, Auditorium Hotel, Chicago. Return at once." Meanwhile the news had spread around the little town. Men seemed dazed. It was unbelievable, impossible, monstrous. They could not conceive of this stupendous frustration of all their hopes and desires. Yet there on the bulletin boards was that frightful headline: "Platform at Chicago Declares for Gold Standard." "Gold Bugs Win by Treachery." Even when they bought the papers and saw the horrid news set forth in plain, presumably unlying type, they refused to accept it as true.

Some few men were impatient at the account given in the local papers, notwithstanding the fact that Ropes had given the best of his faculties in its preparation. They desired to learn more of the details of the great disaster, the great "crime of '96," as they called it. And they were sorely tempted to break their compact, forswear all their previous statements as to "Eastern sheets,"

and ride the whole twenty miles down to Wawa Station, where, on the arrival of the 12.40 eastern express, they could obtain the daily papers from some of the big and despised cities. But their loyalty to the silver cause even in time of trouble overcame their curiosity to ascertain the full extent of its defeat, if that knowledge had to be gained from the "gold-bug press." And no man of Erona showed his face that day at Wawa Station when the express came by. No one happened to ride over again from Boscober, the nearest town, thirty miles away. And so it happened that Ropes's scheme worked even more successfully than he had considered possible, for he had hardly expected that he could carry on the deception to the end.

Friday, July 10th, when the convention met, nothing remained to be done except the voting. Harrity of Pennsylvania put in nomination Robert B. Pattison of that State, so that those gold men who did not choose to remain silent could have some candidate for whom to vote. Then the balloting began. There was hardly enough doubt in the minds

of most of those present to make the contest exciting. Even the Bland men had lost hope. Besides, the visitors and the delegates themselves were completely worn out by the hysterical scenes through which they had passed of late. The first ballot showed Bryan, 119; Bland, 235; Boies, 85; Pattison, 95,—and on each successive ballot Bryan gained, Bland held his own, and Boies lost, until on the fifth ballot, when the States began to break away from Bland, Bryan's nomination was made. This was about three o'clock in the afternoon. The cheering was loud and long, but there was a lack of earnestness and heartiness. Any applause sounded mild after the wild scenes of the previous morning; and, after all, the victory was almost too easy. Most of the gold leaders had left the convention by the fifth ballot, and while the cheering was going on they were far away at their hotels packing up and making ready to leave the city, saddened and filled with ill forebodings for the future of the party and of the country. After dinner the delegates returned to the convention hall in a half-interested way, and without enthusiasm, and

for no particular reason that was given by any one, nominated Arthur Sewall of Maine for Vice-President.

Ropes sat long at his desk before he could make up his mind just what kind of a climax he should compose for his astounding feat of historical fiction. To his amazement, no telegram had come to him to tell him that Erona had discovered the deception. He had written an elaborate and exciting account of the nominations of the evening before, transposing names in an ingeniously astonishing manner and attaching descriptions of the actual scenes of enthusiasm to imaginary speeches nominating prominent gold men. That was easy. The question then presented itself to him, Whom should he nominate for President? He thought of William E. Russell of Massachusetts, but that would not be sufficiently distasteful to Erona. Finally he concluded that the most obnoxious name would be that of William C. Whitney of New York. Thereupon he wrote a glowing account of Whitney's nomination on the seventeenth ballot by a vote of 602 to 144 for Teller; 90

for Bland; 48 for Boies; and 36 for Bryan. Then for an ingenious, mocking, finishing touch he inserted one truthful fact into his web of lies, and described the unanimous nomination for Vice-President, as a sort of consolation prize for the free-silverites, of an Eastern silverite, Arthur Sewall of Maine. When he signed his name to the end of this telegram, he gave a sigh. His fun was over. But what a glorious revenge it had been! It was almost worth the six years' experience through which he had gone. It was also worth the cost of the telegrams and of his hotel bills; for Ropes was not so mean in spirit as to make his employers pay for his fun. He had paid out of his own pocket for every word of every telegram which he had sent and for all his expenses at Chicago. The result was the almost total disappearance of his six years' small savings. But that was of no consequence at all.

His telegram announcing the nomination of the ticket of "Whitnev and Sewall" did not cause the sensation in Erona which Ropes had hoped for, because the people were now prepared for and callous to the worst of

bad news. They received it sullenly and almost silently; and they remained in this temper throughout the morning, and up to the hour of three o'clock.

The inhabitants of Erona will probably never forget the hour of three o'clock on the afternoon of Saturday, July 11, 1896; for at that hour Jake McCulloch jerked up a pair of foam-covered, exhausted horses in front of the "Erona Battle-Cry" office, and yelled and shrieked like a madman. It was some time before any one could gather any meaning from the disjointed words and oaths that flew wildly from him. Then somebody caught "Bryan"—"President"—"Ropes."

A minute later, the whole population had learned the news; and a raving mob stormed through the absolutely empty room in the boarding-house formerly occupied by "Blue-eyed Billy" Ropes, late of the "Erona Battle-Cry," and now fervently consigned by the passionate desires of every man in Erona to a very undesirable and subterranean locality.

And at that very moment, ten minutes past three on the afternoon of July 11th, William

Rawdon Ropes was hastening toward the East on the New York limited, never again to visit the unhealthy town of Erona or the great and limitless West.

A week later the editors of the "Erona Battle-Cry" and the "Erona Star" received by mail a bill for "salary for services performed at Chicago, July 1st to July 10th," receipted in full, and attached thereto were receipted hotel and telegraph bills and a slip of paper with these words on it: "I trust my efforts to give you 'plenty of excitement' were satisfactory."

THE MEMBER FROM THE
NINTH

THE MEMBER FROM THE NINTH

A STORY OF DOMESTIC AND POLITICAL LIFE

BY JAMES GARDNER SANDERSON

THE contract man of the Asphalt Company had already been twice to the house to confer with Michael, and now, even while Michael lay ill, he had come again. It was a matter to be mentioned with much pride to Mrs. Monahan as Nora did her Monday's washing on the back stoop; and Mrs. Monahan's trans-railinged propitiation, born of her landlord's rising importance in the community of Shanty Hill, was deeply gratifying. To know a member of the Select Council, however that organiza-

tion may belie its adjective, is something. "Isn't he the b'y now!" ejaculated Mrs. Monahan, admiringly raising two red and soapy hands.

To which Nora, not even trying to repress her honest pride, rejoined: "I'm thinkin' me Mike is as good as anny of thim. It isn't ivery man has min like that a-followin' him around."

"An' to think of hims havin' a saloon and ownin' this house at his age," continued Mrs. Monahan. "Dear, dear, and my man's old enough to be his father—widout a cent."

"There wor three carriages came yister-day," said Nora joyously, while her soft cheeks bloomed. "Squires, wid silk hats and illigant clothes, I think they was."

Mrs. Monahan laughed indulgently. Nora's gray eyes and open Irish face bid strongly for indulgence—even from her own sex. "Sure, we have no squires here," she replied. "Ye should know that be now wid the three years ye're over. 'Tis the street car and telephone companies' managers more like," she added shrewdly.

"And why?" asked Nora blankly. She

was too used to her mistakes to trouble over them.

"'Tis his infloonce they want," said Mrs. Monahan meditatively. "I donno—but I've seen thim big wans before, and ye can make up your mind, Mrs. Conry, that they're afther it."

"Maybe," answered Nora sedately, after a little moment of uncomprehending silence. "It's me Mike they're afther, though; that I know."

"And well ye may. He's a great lad in the ward annyhow," said Mrs. Monahan, "and it's me that hopes to see him mayor some day. Will ye not come over and luk at me pigs, Mrs. Conry?"

Within the house Michael lay ill and feverish. It was against the doctor's orders, but the contract man of the Tonsor Asphalt Company was with him.

The councilman was but one of a hundred. Born in the County of Kerry, he had set his face and ambitions toward America some five years before the visit of the contract man above mentioned. He had left Ireland and the shackles of its bogs and evictions, chiefly

for the sake of Nora's gray eyes; but the pungent odor of his native peat was scarcely free from his nostrils before that had become a secondary matter. His calculating heart and soaring ambition permitted nothing else. The sorrow of their parting vanished; he flung himself body and soul into the game and won.

After the first inevitable struggle in New York, he had drifted westward, and finally reaching Pennsylvania and the manufacturing city of Dalton, his bark had become wedged in the current. During the first year he ran a "speak-easy," until it brought him enough profits to embark legitimately in a small saloon. Then, under the protecting scroll of a license, he had made his venture. From this vantage ground his eyes first looked on ward politics with their wondrous possibilities. They attracted him and his native shrewdness, coupled with a certain quickness in reading his fellowmen, soon gained him his footing. His energy and the success of his saloon increased it. At the end of the second year, he had become a captain on the city's police force, and the right-

hand man of the mighty Coogan, who held the Ninth in the hollow of his palm.

Incidentally, the office was not without profit. He bought a lot next his saloon, borrowed money from Coogan, built a double-house, and, after much cogitation, sent for Nora. She had come; fresh, comely above all other women in the Ninth, quaint in her never-failing wonder at the great new world, and admirable in her unswerving, trusting adoration of Michael. The hills and dales of Kerry were in her gentle gray eyes, and her soft brogue, falling gratefully upon the ears of the ward, sent many a warped Irish-American memory wandering back to an all but buried past. The hearts of men and women instinctively went out to her in protecting tenderness. Even Coogan, the thin-faced, far-sighted "boss," with all his unscrupulous schemes of plunder, found his heart beating a faster measure in her presence.

But because Michael loved her and knew that she loved him, trusting in his honor and strictest integrity with the implicit faith that a woman gives to her husband before he

sways from the pedestal on which she has placed him, Nora lived happily upon the proceeds of steals and the candid filchings of ward money, unknowing and uncorrupted. Knowing that these things which had become almost second nature to him would be to her not less than heart-breaking, he guarded her ignorance sedulously. To himself he often said, "Sure, she'd raise fury if she knew. 'Twon't do." To her he growled in response to timid inquiries regarding certain inexplicable transactions, "It's not for you to know. Wud I tell ye and ye Mrs. Monahan, and lave me be the laugh of the ward?" It was never necessary to further protect the star sessions of the ring which met in the rear room of "Conry's," next door, for Nora's softer brogue was never raised in protest. Her faith in Michael suffered no doubts. The king could do no wrong.

In two years' time Michael had risen to greater successes, riding into the Select Council on the crest of the usual wave of doubtful reform. Prosperity poured in an unending stream upon the Conrys. The

cabbages spread magnificently; the ducks waddled fatly, and the two children throve through lusty babyhood. Coogan only was discontented, and growing to like Nora more than a peaceful mind permitted, frowned darkly. His position and intimacy gave him privileges. "I made 'im, Nora; y' should be thankin' *me*, girl," he said, devouring her with hungry eyes. "Aye! And d'ye know why, Nora? D'ye know why?" he added tenderly.

And Nora with innocent coquetry, albeit startled a little deep in her heart at his tone, replied saucily: "Nor do I care, Coogan. Sure ye can't make *me* believe me Mike needs help of anny one."

Through all the visits of the mysterious silk-hatted men who came in carriages, and through all of Michael's increase in girth and riches, she remained in contented ignorance of ways and means. Her pride and simple belief in his success and integrity grew stronger daily. Even Coogan's calls, which grew more frequent with the passing of time, and which, though made on the plea of business with Michael, generally occurred

when he was away, left no trace upon her clear-eyed, wholesome innocence.

The contract man sat on a chair and watched him lazily through a cloud of cigar smoke. His polished shoes rested flatly upon the red and green jute rug, and his open coat afforded glimpses of a heavily embroidered waistcoat and a fob, with which he played absently. "It ought to go through," he said slowly.

"'Tis r-robbin' the city," replied the sick man cautiously. "It's the same pave you people put down five years ago, and luk at th' condition av it now."

"Well—it's all getting mighty hot," said the contract man, yawning until his eyes disappeared in the rolls of his fat face. "You, being sick, don't know. Just thought I'd drop up and try to show you our position, you know. Half the boys want us to repair, and half favor a city plank with a brick pave. Neidlinger and Hawkes, of course, want the city to run it. They're not selling bricks and cement for nothing. It's a bad fight, though, and your vote for us would clinch it.

Both sides are firm as rocks, and we want one man for our majority. We'll put in a good pave, if we're let, too. A fair contract, and a ten-year guarantee."

"What's your bid?" asked the sick man indifferently.

"A hundred and seventy-five thousand for resurfacing and keeping every mile of pave in town in repair for ten years."

"Ye'll make a lot o' money," said Michael.

"If we get the contract," said the contract man smoothly. "And I can assure you, Conry, that our friends won't regret it," he added significantly.

"Well—I donno," said Michael. "I ain't been down in some time. I cud go down Thursday, I suppose, but I guess now I won't. I'm too sick."

The contract man cleared his throat. He felt that the councilman's speech was tentative, for these were not their first dealings together. Nevertheless, some things require diplomatic handling. "It ought to go through," he said again, persuasively. "Yes, it ought! The city'll be disgraced if this keeps on. Besides—I'd like to see you

on the right side. If—if there is any friendly arrangement we can make——”

Michael thought of his mortgages, certain notes held by indefinite corporations, and lastly of Neidlinger and Hawkes's offer of the day before.

“I mighty near broke my leg over that steam-roller of yours on Linden Street last year,” he said moodily, staring at the ceiling, “and I donno about me helpin’ you. What have you iver done for me? I owe you nothin’. It’s no help but a damage suit of fifteen hundred I’ll bring, I’m thinkin’—and that as soon as I get out.”

The man smiled sleepily again. He was used to the work; but this seemed unusually easy. “That can be settled out of court,” he said easily, rising and smoothing his hat. “We don’t want any trouble with you. If you really think you’re damaged that badly, I’ll see that you get it—unless the mayor vetoes. It’s a good deal, though.”

“It’s that or nothin’,” said Michael grimly. “There’s other claims I have of the kind against other people,” he added. “Sind me wife in as ye go out. I think me head

is goin' to break. Fifteen hundred, mind ye. No cint less."

"I'll take care of it," said the contract man, "if that's the least."

"It is," said Michael. "Me feelings were hurt by your r-roller."

The Select Branch of the Dalton City Council, that august, deliberative body which, with its companion organization, the Common Council, holds the fortunes of so many corporations and contractors balanced upon its giant thumb, had convened for its regular Thursday evening's session. The gray-haired president sat on his platform gazing abstractedly at the crowds which thronged the pillared galleries. On the floor the municipal fathers lounged in awesome and obese ease in their semi-circle of arm-chairs, or strolled here and there, gathering in knots and small oases of twos and threes, bandying persiflage of a dignity commensurate with their station.

The biggest fight of the year was on. That "ten-tentacled octopus," as the Congressman's daily had dubbed the Tonsor Asphalt

Company, was in the field to try conclusions with the virtuous Neidlinger and Hawkes, leaders of the city-plant faction. The corporation was again at war with the individual.

Yet the question of repairing the streets had risen to such a position of burning importance in the city's welfare that every land-owner was bound up in its interests. Five large manufactories had already been lost by the Board of Trade because of the high rate of taxation and the poor streets. The immediate mitigation of the latter evil, at least, meant much to that short-sighted and narrow-minded citizen who was foolish enough to demand stridently—as if he could be answered—“where the money was going to?”

As the first dull routine of business dragged on stragglers drifted in. The galleries became more crowded. It had become noised abroad that on this night the famous deadlock would at last be broken, and that the Asphalt Company had a card up its sleeve. An air of general expectancy and tense excitement was manifest as the hour for bring-

ing up the resolution drew near. A buzz of subdued conversation hummed through the anxious balconies. But in the gallery the contract man smiled sleepily—albeit a little anxiously, for Michael had not yet arrived. In a few moments he rose, elbowed his way through the crowd, and disappeared. Five minutes later he imperturbably pushed back to his seat.

Ten minutes afterward the venerable presiding officer placidly declared Mr. Hawkes, who moved to refer the asphalt question to a committee, of which he suggested the names, to be out of order, and in the midst of a painful silence the clerk wearily rose to read the resolution and to call the roll. As he had done both on this question for six consecutive meetings, and as he dealt not in bricks, cement, or asphalt, he was somewhat tired.

The crowd in the gallery craned their necks. Those who were nearest the rail leaned far over, straining their ears to catch every word. Almost to a man they would have voted for the city plant, for they feared with the fear of poverty-stricken property-

owners the awarding of the contract to the Tonsor Asphalt Company. It meant ten more years of corruption; it meant the retirement in disgust and discouragement of those few sterling men in the councils who held the honor of the city and the welfare of its citizens at heart. The question as to whether the government of Dalton's 100,000 souls lay in the hollow of one corporation's hand hung upon the flimsiest of threads. The corporation's victory would be the last glaring proof that the councils were, body and soul, its property.

And all the crowd left Michael Conry out of their reckonings. It was known that he lay bound down by typhoid fever; the contract man had been cunning enough for that, so they were justified. But in the gallery the contract man yawned. He felt that it was his party.

"Ferber," droned the clerk.

"Aye."

"O'Malley."

"No."

"McCarthy."

"No."

"Getstall."

"Aye."

Evenly the votes broke, ward by ward, first, second, third, fourth—there was no wavering in the ranks. It was a fight to the death. Fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth; still even. The anxious galleries held their breath.

"Conry—ninth," called the clerk as usual.

There was no answer. The president began slowly and stiffly to worm into his overcoat.

"Conry."

Still the silence of absence. No answer. The asphalt man smiled as though bored. For the last time the clerk's voice droned the name. "Conry."

"*Aye!*"

The clerk wheeled, looked up in the gallery savagely—and the contract man looked back at him. He leaned forward, his pudgy hands hooked viciously around the railing; and his eyes, now far from sleepy, glared a malevolent, tiger green. He was smiling snarlingly, like a wolf in a corner. The president stopped with his arm half

in his sleeve; the members gasped; the people craned their necks; and five seconds later, in the midst of the hush, the chamber door swung open, and Michael Conry, bright-eyed and flushed, strode dizzily to his seat.

"Aye!" he cried. "That's me vote! Yis! 'Tis the steam r-roller I like. Take that to yourself, Hawkes! 'Tis a blow f'r old Ireland! 'Tis—'tis—" Then while some one led him babbling and staggering away, many others, even in the midst of the uproar, saw that the vote was properly recorded.

For the next month Michael Conry lay ill beyond the skill of man. The will that dragged him from his bed to the Council Chamber availed him nothing, and he tossed in wildest delirium. Nora, watching by his bedside, grew haggard and thin with sleepless anxiety. The soft bloom left her cheeks, dispossessed by hollows of deepest woe; her voice lost all its happiness, and her gray eyes dulled with anguish and bitter pain, for as the days dragged monotonously on, deep

in her heart there sank the knowledge that Michael—her Michael, her dear lord and master—was going to die.

Coogan and Mrs. Monahan came daily. The doctor did not count for comfort, for despite Nora's clasped fingers and white, appealing face, his science could do no good. At night she watched and kept her vigils alone. When the baby cried fretfully in the still, dark hours, she walked with her in the next room, singing her to sleep with choking lullabies of Ireland. When the day came again, though the child still slept, the drowsy sun found her sitting fully clothed, eyes haggard with the dumbness of their pathos, beside Michael's bed. Bravely and with the whole devotion of her love, she sat watching and ready to move at the slightest flutter of his eyelid. Her worn cheeks grew to rival his as he lay slipping away from her, and the enduring little figure drooped lower and lower as the strain began to tell. But not even the vigorous Mrs. Monahan could shake her resolution. "I'll stay till I die," she said to her protests, "or till he dies. 'Tis all the same. Me place is here."

As the hot June days slipped smoking by, Michael grew worse more rapidly. Sometimes he raged in fits of blasphemous delirium, and sometimes he babbled meaninglessly of every one in his past, from his old father in Kerry down to his wife and Coogan. Nora thought she understood nothing of ward money and protection, felt another of the few remaining chords of her heart being wrenched and torn to pieces when, his emaciated hand beating unceasingly upon the spread, he moaned and muttered bits of Irish phrases or spoke in a weird, far-off voice of little Michael, the baby, and herself. In one hour he would be in his father's shanty deep in talk with him and with his mother; in the next he would fiercely contradict a statement made by an imaginary Coogan in the rear room of "Conry's." As a rule, Nora's touch and gentle "Whist now, Mike, dear," would soothe him; but Coogan he could not suffer near. For some occult reason, though he did not recognize him, Coogan's presence made him rage like a madman.

Then at last there came a period when, free from the chains of delirium or the un-

consciousness of stupor, he looked around the room, and saw death waiting in its far corner. He awoke to consciousness only to realize that he was in a deal with one far mightier than himself, and more inexorable than Coogan in his insistence upon his share. He was conscious of a slight surprise, as his mind grew clear, that no horror of death possessed him, and he even found the contemplation of non-existence slightly interesting. Later he began to think.

Nora's strained white face and the drooping lines of her young figure as she moved about the room inspired within him a strange new tenderness. It was with an odd feeling—a feeling almost as if he were planning again for their after-life together—that he gradually arranged his business affairs into mental orderliness. At last he called her, and as she came obediently and sat down upon the plush-covered chair beside the bed, he caught his breath, conscious of a sharp stab of pain.

"Nora, dear," he said, taking one of her hands nervously, "ye've been a good woman to me, and it's sorry I am I've been no bet-

ther a man ; if I'd known—but now my time's most up. 'Tis too late."

The tears that Nora had so long and so courageously held back welled out, and the dreadful finality in his voice and words broke down her courage at last. She threw herself upon her knees beside the bed. " Oh, Mike! Mike, me darlint," she wailed in anguish, " don't go! Don't—I can't do widout ye. Ye're all I have. All I have, Mike, dear. Don't be lavin' me—" and she broke off in a torrent of sobs.

Michael watched her. He was too weak to comfort her, and the knowledge was bitter. " Don't dear," he whispered after a little. " I'm not gone yet. Time an' a-plinty to cry thin. Besides—there's something I must tell ye, and—and it's bad enough I feel already."

Nora straightened herself bravely. " I don't know what I'll do widout ye," she said simply.

" It's that I want to talk about," said Mike weakly. " I didn't think I'd have to tell ye. 'Twould have been all right, but

now—well, I'm in debt, Nora, and the house and saloon'll have to go."

"They can all go," replied Nora, "all of thim—if you'll only stay. Wid you I don't need thim. Widout you what would I do with thim?"

"The house and saloon," replied the sick man, pressing close upon his single thought. "All you'll have will be the fifteen hundred the Asphalt Company owes me. Now see. Pay my funeral an' a good wake an' all the bills if y' can out of little Mike's bank account. 'Twill be enough, I think. Thin, after the property is sold out, get that fifteen hundred an' go home with the childer to ye're father. 'Twill be a-plinty to keep you over there as long as you live, if ye're careful. God knows it's sorry I am to be lavin' ye so short, but if I'd lived ye'd been a rich man's wife. Ask Coogan—he'll tell ye 'tis true. Somehow, I never thought of me dyin'. I was makin' money, y' see, and I thought I couldn't die, I guess. But promise me ye'll get the asphalt money. They'll pay ye; they brought me here—thim an' me

own foolishness, so they'll pay ye. 'Twas for— Do ye promise? Fifteen hundred they own me, Nora acushla—for damages. Promise me. God knows I'll die easier knowin'."

And Nora, seeing through her tears nothing but the dying eyes of the man who stood for her all in life; hearing nothing but his ever-weakening voice; knowing nothing except that she thought her heart was breaking, stretched out her arms and promised.

The wake and funeral had been befitting the dead man's station. The priest had spoken very comfortingly of his integrity and virtues; six pall-bearers from the councils, two lodges, and fully one-quarter of the "Hill's" adult population attended the obsequies. The hearse carried eight black plumes, and there were thirty-five carriages in the procession.

Yet as Nora sat a week later in the room where he had died, the room which, though no stick of furniture had been moved, was still so subtly, so unalterably changed, her sorrow, her loneliness, and the

fear of the world weighed down upon her like an intangible, invisible dread, frightening and stifling her. She could not bring herself to the realization of her loss. It was not credible that Michael—her Michael—upright and honest, universally loved and honored, was gone—to never again return. She could not believe that he might not enter alone or with Coogan, any moment, through the door at the end of the hall. But gradually the acceptance of his death forced itself upon her, and now, brooding, she let the consciousness of her lack of power to bring him back sink with all its hopelessness deep into her soul. There rose a certain exaltation with it as she remembered what he had been, and to herself she made a vow. In life she had looked up to him and loved him; in death she would protect his name—a sacred thing hallowed by that love and doubly hallowed by its own spotlessness. Her eyes shone softly with the glow of her resolve.

Coogan came—and Nora remembered her husband's last words proudly. He sat down upon the chair by the door and cleared his throat.

"Ye've been kind to me, Coogan, and I'll see ye paid," she said greeting him.

"Paid?" replied Coogan, uncomprehendingly.

"Ye're not after ye're money thin?" asked Nora, smiling wanly. "Niver mind, for ye'll get it."

"Money! Nora!" cried the boss, upsetting the chair and striding across the room. "D'ye think I've been watching me money this while? D'ye think I've been comin' here because of me *money*?"

Nora looked up at him. A look in his eyes frightened her, and his thin, spare figure seemed to lengthen as he bent forward. Instinctively she put up one hand as if to ward a coming blow.

"It's you I want," blazed Coogan. Then with a sudden change: "Ah, Nora, dear, me heart is gone entirely. Ever since the day Mike brought ye here I've loved ye. Will ye not come? It's a lone woman ye are now, wid two children, and ye'll all be wanting a home soon."

Nora rose unsteadily. To her tightly strung nerves, worn by all she had suffered,

and breaking rudely upon the sanctity of her reveries, the shock of Coogan's passion came at first like some numbing blow, and made her feel as though she were standing face to face with an awful, revolting crime. For a moment she stood robbed of speech. Swift was her recovery.

"Dennis Coogan, shame be to ye," she cried, with a white face and beating heart. "Me husband not dead tin days, an' spakin' of such! I thought ye were me friend. I thought ye're heart was good to me. You—lovin'?—ah no, Coogan. Ye mean well perhaps. I didn't mean to speak illy. But I loved Mike whin he was alive, and 'tis God that knows I can't stop lovin' him just because he's dead. I'll always love him, and niver will I take another man."

Coogan dropped the hand he had raised. There was a chill in the words that checked even his ardent nature. He did not know this sort of love. There broke upon his mind a glimmering—like the first few night lights of a distant city. "But he's dead, Nora," he said, uncomprehendingly.

"Aye," said Nora, steadfastly, "but he's my man."

"The house and saloon will go," said Coogan.

"I have some money comin'," replied Nora.

Coogan looked at her sharply. He knew about the money. "Whisht! Ye'll see the time," he said hopefully.

A month went by. In that month all of Michael's outstanding accounts were paid in full; the saloon was sold under foreclosure by the Hawkes Cement Works; all of Nora's furniture had been bought by a second-hand dealer for about one-tenth of what it had cost, and little Michael's bank account was balanced to zero. Even the house Nora no longer regarded as her own; it was Coogan's. She might have held it, and certainly Coogan would never have taken it; but the zeal of a fanatic had seized her; Michael's name was to be cleared. Not a dollar should be unpaid. He had lived honestly; he should rest honestly.

Coogan called again, and Nora delivered

unto him the keys. "'Tis yours, Coogan," she said bravely, "and now Mike's name is clear."

"Take them back and stay here," said the boss, flushing a dark red. "D'ye think me a man or a blood-sucker?"

But Nora brooked no opposition, and in the end Coogan stood in the deserted side of the house, staring at the keys thrown down before him. Through the wall came the sound of stifled sobs, for the last parting from her home had wrenched the sorrow beyond silent bearing, and she had fled with both the children to the sympathetic Mrs. Monahan. Coogan heard, and the lines in his face settled into an interesting grimness—the kind of grimness that means a man has resolved to get a certain thing or die.

The flaggings were hard, and the baby was heavy, and little Michael dragged at her arm laggingly; Nora had not remembered that the walk to town was so long. Yet somehow she had not been able to leave the children long enough to come alone. Since Michael's death she could not bear to be separated from them; they were all she had

left of him. She found, too, that her widow's veil—lent for the occasion by Mrs. Monahan's deceased brother's wife—blew awkwardly at the street corners. Everything was very strange and confusing. She shrank timidly from the business-like lack of sympathy of the elevators; and the huge, humming bee-hive of a building which she entered made her heart beat with a little fear.

The contract man emerged from his inner sanctuary as the office boy announced her. He had been expecting her, but he did not say so. Nor did he offer his hand—an omission of which he had never been guilty in his visits to Michael's home—and Nora sat down in the chair to which he sleekly waved her feeling vaguely hurt at the neglect. Little Michael stood shyly at her knee; the baby crowed, and reached gladly for the contract man's watch charm, and within the inner office a man rose and crept to convenient hearing distance.

"Misther Dale," said Nora, after waiting for the first word, "I—it's a nice day."

"A charming day, Mrs. Conry," acquiesced the contract man, blandly.

Nora took heart at his tone. "I—I came, sir, about the money," she continued.

"Oh," said the contract man with a rising inflection, but with apparent mystification.

"The money you're owin' Mike," explained Nora. "The fifteen hundred."

"I'm afraid I don't understand," said the contract man, clearing his throat. "Did he send you here?"

"Before he died," replied Nora with a little choke, "he says you owed him, an' fer me to get it. I'm goin' back to Ireland wid it."

"But we don't owe him anything now," said the contract man, slowly.

Nora's heart dropped. There was a mistake. Mike had never lied to her. But there was something dreadful in the contract man's smooth voice as he went on talking.

"We couldn't pay it, you see, Mrs. Conry," he was saying. "We've too many live people to bother with now. Besides, we didn't really need his vote."

"His vote," cried Nora, sickening with a sudden fear.

"Why, yes," said the contract man, wearily, "that's the fourth vote of his we've bought. I don't see why you need money. Forty-five hundred from one concern is good, isn't it? That's better money than most of them make."

Nora rose, trembling like a leaf. "Ye bought me Mike's vote, ye say? Ye *bought* it? Oh, Misther Dale, it isn't thrue, is it? Say it isn't. Oh, say it isn't!" The rising wail of a breaking heart spoke in her cry.

The contract man was silent. His little eyes looked into hers with a steady, selfish cruelty. His sleek face shone with satisfaction. Nora gasped. "Thin that money—that fifteen hundred dollars."

"Bribe money, madam. Sorry—but a man must live, you know, if he wants to collect bills like that. If you care for further proof than my words, I think I can accommodate you with the testimony of a witness," and the contract man, who had feasted on the vision of this *dénouement* for a month, leaned back in his chair, and waved his hand blandly toward the door of the inner office.

Then while the room still whirled before Nora's eyes the door swung outward, and Coogan stood upon the threshold. His lean face and deep-set eyes shone with a malignant fire; yet strangely enough, after one swift glance at Nora, he turned the anger of his gaze upon the astonished contract man.

"Ye blackguard, Dale," he said slowly, "besides robbin' a poor woman, ye'd lie her man's character away, wud ye? 'Twas straight money, and you know it. Small thanks to you that Mike Conry was as honest a man as ever was! Say again that ye bribed him if ye dare!"

The contract man gasped, and tried to grasp things. There seemed to be something wrong with his carefully arranged *finale*. Coogan had been cast as the cat's paw in the melodrama—not as the hero. The subtle Ulysses who was to save the Tonsor Company \$1,500 was to have played that part. There was some mistake. Then, as the enormity of the insult swept away all other considerations, his gorge rose mightily, and his self-control and craftiness slipped

away like running water. Nora shrank back into the recess of the window as he rose to his feet, for there was so cold, so Satanic a look of concentrated hate in his eyes that her heart grew faint. Coogan eyed him as a cat eyes a mouse.

"In the first place," he said slowly, his voice shaking with passion, "you had better wash your own hands; what did *you* come here for this afternoon? In the second place—get out of this office and stay out! In the third, though it is absolutely none of your business, I'm not in the least afraid of you, and I repeat that I bribed Conry to vote our way!"

"For all that ye wrote your manager that Mike Conry was honest and that you'd have to buy some one else? Read that!"

And the contract man stared stupidly at the letter which Coogan thrust into his hands. It was a queerly folded, legal-looking letter, and began oddly with the words "State of Pennsylvania, County of Luzawanna, ss.:" after which, in language more or less technical, it set forth a certain statute of 31st March, 1860, and an averment that one

Arthur L. Dale had been guilty of offending against said statute; that he had bribed and unduly influenced one Michael Conry, councilman, and that the peace and dignity of the Commonwealth had been thereby offended.

"I have just been to the District Attorney's office," said Coogan, softly. "He thinks that wid the help of the witnesses prisent ye will get a year, at least. He drew th' indictment himself."

For a moment the two men looked each other fairly in the face. Nora uncomprehendingly stared from one to the other. Then the contract man, reading in Coogan's eyes the hopelessness of the struggle, half surrendered. "You'll go with me if I do," he said, weakly.

"I will—gladly," said Coogan, "wid the hope, however, that it'll be solitary confinement."

"I—I had forgotten that letter," the contract man said, lamely, hauling down his colors.

"I thought ye had," answered Coogan grimly. "And now, as soon as ye have

apologized to Mrs. Conry for insultin' her man, and as soon as ye have written that check, we'll be acceptin' of your kind invitation to leave."

On the street he turned to Nora. "The lyin', smooth-face rogue!" he cried angrily.

And Nora, whose idol had tottered and in the nick of time been thrust back on the shelf in safety, merely said, with a shining face, "Oh, Coogan!"

A week later a steamer sailing for Queens-town churned panting out of New York harbor. A tall, thin man stood on the dock until it vanished in the network of shipping on the river. His face was a little drawn, and his lips pressed tightly together, as he watched the yellow tops of the steamer's stacks blur in the haze of low-hanging smoke. Then he walked away.

Coogan was going back to the Ninth to rule undisputed, to wax fat and influential, and to gather much rich plunder, but—he was going alone.

DEEPWATER POLITICS

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BY MAY McHENRY

ONE day last January, when the air had a nip to it, Old Man John Barton leaned over his barn-yard gate and whistled "Maid of Dundee" softly in a minor key, as his nephew, Bob Barton, came along.

Bob was on horseback, with a freckle-nosed child and a basketful of eggs balanced in front. He urged his horse close to the fence, that he might lean down and address his uncle in the confidentially lowered tone befitting the subject of politics.

"Say, Uncle John, have you heard the news? The Hillers are putting up Old Sammie McNab to run for supervisor against John Penny."

The Old Man took off his cap and his mitten, and ran his fingers reflectively through his thick mane of fine white hair.

"So? Well, let Old Sammie run, Bob. Running for office is one of the inalienable rights of the American citizen."

"The McNabs are workers. Young Sam is a tiger," Bob went on. "The fact that John Penny has had the office four terms running gives them something to work on. We ought to have our best man at the front if we want to beat Old Sammie McNab. It won't do to let the Hillers get ahead of us here. The Valley pays the lion's share of the taxes, and we have a right to a supervisor who will look after our interests. Maybe Old Sammie would open those ditches along the road through your meadows and mine, and maybe he wouldn't."

"Don't worry over Old Sammie and those ditches, Bob; we're going to keep the supervisorship right where it is," the Old Man announced with decision. "John Penny is all right. He can run on his record, and that's more than all officeseekers can do. He is out and out the best supervisor we've ever had. When Judge Brewster was up here last summer he told me he believed our road master had not an equal in the

State. You tell the boys that! When we have material of that sort, it is our duty to show appreciation by keeping it where it will do the most good. Tell them that. Moderation is a good thing even in holding office, but the right man in the right place is better. Tell them that. We must avoid any friction in our ranks, with the caucus only two weeks off. John Penny Barton is the man, and Harmony is the word, Bob—Harmony.”

Old Man Barton chuckled as Bob rode on. “So Robert has been hearing the bee buzz himself! He hardly knows a road-scraper from a spring-tooth harrow! But fire and tow! I wonder what Dolly and Sam will think of it.”

During the next few days all Deepwater was agitated with that question: what would Dolly and Sam think of it?

Dolly was the only unmarried daughter of John Penny Barton, and Sam was the sole male offspring of the house of McNab. Everybody knew that Dolly had her quilts pieced, her rag carpet at the weaver's, and her wedding clothes made, ready to marry

Sam; and everybody knew that Sam had the finest new house on the Hill with the last coat of paint drying, ready to give Dolly just as comfortable a home as she had been used to.

While all the world wondered, Sam and Dolly got together, according to their custom on Saturday evening, and tried to decide what they really did think of it.

"Of course this will make no difference between you and me. There is no politics with us," Dolly said.

"I'm glad you look at it in that sensible way, Dolly," Sam replied with a breath of relief, and a reach of his long arm for her tantalizingly evasive person. "I didn't know just how you might take it, and I—well, look, Dolly—the politicians may fight it out—but you and I—oh, yes, Dolly!"

"Cousin Bob tells me you are going around making speeches for your father, but I know that is a mistake," Dolly remarked severely, as she pushed him away.

"It is. Speech-making is not in my line. Of course I'll do what I can for the head of the family, but I'll not make many speeches."

"Sam McNab! Do you mean you will fight my pa?"

"Being a Hiller, of course I will fight the Valleyites and their candidate for supervisor. Why, what's the matter? Didn't you just say that politics makes no difference with us?"

"I didn't say it will make no difference if you go around electioneering and working against pa. If our parents are running for the same office, you and I need not take sides. That is what I meant, and you know it. Why, Sam, I do not see how you can *want* to take part against any one I care for!"

"You are just like the rest of the women, after all," groaned Sam. "Can't you see that politics is outside of what a fellow cares for, and all that? It is a question of principles of government and—and citizenship. At least, that's the theory. Private affairs are not in it. They have nothing to do with the case. As a citizen and a voter, I have a duty."

"You have a duty to me, and that should come first!"

So they went on—Sam arguing from one

L. of C.

point of view, Dolly arguing from another—until finally the young man slammed the front door angrily, and went off with a little pearl ring weighing like lead in his vest pocket, and a heart much heavier in his bosom.

Dolly, bright-eyed and white-lipped, swept tempestuously into the kitchen where Old Man Barton was talking ways and means with John Penny.

“Uncle John, we *must* beat those Hillers. I will cry my eyes out if we don't!” she exclaimed.

“Fire and tow! the child looks half-minded to cry her eyes out right now,” commented the Old Man.

During the two weeks preceding the caucus, feeling between Hill and Valley ran high. Every man, woman, and child in the township, not to mention kinsfolks outside, took sides in the supervisorship fight. Parson Minter postponed his “protracted meeting” in the wise conviction that after the township election the people would have more time and inclination to think of their souls.

Caucuses are usually held in the village of Sweet Valley in the "ware-room" of Eben Barton's store, which also serves as a polling place on election days. When Deepwaterites of the majority—the hopeless minority seldom puts forward any candidates—met to decide whether John Penny Barton or Samuel McNab, Senior, should be the candidate for supervisor, also incidentally to nominate a constable, squire, and school-director, Eben's store and the porch and the road in front were like a crowded corner in the vicinity of the prize pigs at the county fair.

Voters and pillars of the government stamped around, slapping each other on the back and exchanging plug tobacco, while they discussed the drains through the Barton place, and argued and prophesied expansively as to the certain success of their respective candidates.

At the outset the Valleyites scored a point, though their opponents did not realize it at the time.

As standing chairman of all public meetings, Old Man John Barton stood at the top

of the store steps and announced the hour for beginning business.

"And now, gentlemen," he went on in his pleasantly oratorical style, "since for some years it has been customary for our obliging merchant, Eben, to serve as clerk and watcher at our caucuses, doubtless you will all be willing to trust to his probity and fairness again. Howsomever, since Eben happens to be akin to one whose name is on the blackboard for our consideration, it will, I believe, be more fitting and—ah!—parliamentary to give him an associate. If the action meets approval, I will appoint Samuel McNab, Junior, as that associate."

The Hillers received the appointment with acclaim, and though the young man objected strenuously, he was pushed into the ware-room and seated beside Eben at the table, where Eben's new derby hat served to receive the slips of paper containing the vote of each faithful and zealous worker for the party.

Then Bob Barton took Dan Edgar by the arm, and they went behind the store, where they could permit their faces to expand and wreath with silent mirth.

"That licks 'em!" gurgled Bob with a few fancy steps of triumph. "There is their best worker coralled—shut up for the afternoon as harmless as a blind kitten. Old Samuel and the rest do the talking, but Young Sam knows how to get in the votes: *he* was dangerous. Tell you, the Old Man is slick!"

That was an afternoon of excitement. Probably the liveliest and the most momentous incident was the "licking" of big Thad Prentiss by Johnnie Barton Smith.

Deepwater does not claim Thad Prentiss. He is a bully from a neighboring township, and on account of his size and his reputation as a fire-eater, most people are afraid of him, and he knows it. Chance brought him to Sweet Valley on the afternoon of the caucus, and his natural disposition, together with the raw whiskey he had swallowed at Zeke Cole's tavern on the way down the creek, led him to make a general nuisance of himself. He whooped around Eben's store like an Indian on the war-path, and offered to fight every man in the crowd, either singly or *en masse*. Being denied admittance to the sacred precincts of the

ware-room, where the business of the caucus was being carried on, he became ugly, and after trying to kick in a panel of the door, rammed his fist through a window. The good-natured Deepwaterites laughed at the blatant bully and humored him and endeavored to reason with him.

Finally Thad made the mistake of turning the stream of his profane abuse from Deepwaterites in general upon Old Man Barton in particular. In an instant Bob and two or three others of the younger Bartons were on their feet taking off their coats, but the Old Man's grandson, Johnnie Barton Smith, was quickest. Before anybody realized what was happening, the youngster had slapped the bully twice across the mouth resoundingly.

A few seconds later the two were facing each other in the slush and mud of the road with a circle forming about them. There was a suggestion of David and Goliath: Thad was big and broad and red, with a neck like a Durham bull, and Johnnie was slim and white and pink like a girl. But Johnnie's lithe, lean young body was swift

and strong as a steel trap, and during a year and a half at college he had acquired some science from a good boxing master down-town. "This is my funeral," Johnnie told Bob Barton, and after that no one interfered. Despite the three churches, the new graded school-house, and the Woman's Civic Club, Deepwater enjoys a fight as a cat enjoys cream.

In the remote and peaceful ware-room young Sam McNab was startled to feel Old Man John Barton's hand on his shoulder.

"Just jump up on the table, Sammie, where you can look out of the window, and tell me what is going on in the road," the Old Man said briskly. "Johnnie will try to give Thad Prentiss a justly deserved punishment. Maybe he can do it and maybe he can't. If I should see Johnnie fighting, I might feel obliged to go out and stop it. What are they doing now, Sammie? It isn't always best to interfere. He's keeping out of reach, is he? Thank you, Sammie! That's his plan, to keep on the defensive till he gets the big slunge out of wind. Is Thad trying to wrestle him? That's unfair!

Might as well be in the hug of a grizzly bear. If the boys don't see that Johnnie has fair play, I'll go out there myself. *Johnnie throwed him!* Threwed him over his shoulders by getting his head between his legs? Boys, I taught the lad that holt myself! Now, careful, careful, Johnnie!"

The Old Man resolutely kept his back to the window while Sam and Eben, prancing about excitedly on the table, reported to him the progress of the fight. The ink bottle and the derby hat ballot-box were both upset before they announced the final overthrow and crying for quarter of big Thad Prentiss.

The afternoon ended without further unpleasantness. After the fight the air seemed clearer, and public satisfaction in the humiliation of the bully restored general good humor, though the Hillers regretted it later. Chaffing and joking took the place of arguments that threatened to become bitter, and when Old Man Barton announced the result—that John Penny Barton had been nominated by four votes—and made a little speech about the white dove of peace and about harmony and neighborly good feeling,

and the duty and desirability of upholding the caucus nominee, Hill and Valley alike cheered the Old Man.

Then young Sam McNab stepped out and announced that, notwithstanding the white dove of peace and the caucus nominee, Samuel McNab, Senior, would run for supervisor of public roads on an independent ticket, and both sides cheered again lustily.

As Old Man John Barton limped rheumatically homeward through the early dusk of January, Johnny Barton Smith, who had been scraping off mud and applying rotten apple to his bruised countenance, stepped out of the blacksmith's shop and linked his arm in that of the Old Man.

"Grandfather, that was a rattling speech of yours in the interest of peace. It thrilled me until chills chased up and down my spine."

The Old Man eyed the young reprobate critically in the dusk. "Young man, your eye looks like a freshly blackened stove-lid. Instead of levity, it behooves you to be studying out what in Sam Hill we are going to say to your mother."

For once interest now centered upon the

election, and political fervor continued at white heat after the caucus had named the candidates. The ninety-seven members of the minority enjoyed sudden and novel importance; they became factors in the fight. The Hillers carried on the campaign with remarkable vigor. Day and night young Sam McNab's big bay horse was to be seen on the roads, as that energetic young politician drove with his father over the township, visiting every voter impartially.

John Penny himself shook his head over such pernicious activity. "Looks a little dubious," he admitted; but Old Man John smiled blandly.

In all the driving to and fro, Sam's sleigh and big bay horse never once turned into the lane that led to John Penny's. Dolly, running up to the garret window, where she could look out over the bare apple-tree tops to the hill road, would go down-stairs again, with a red spot on each cheek. She would go about her work singing in such a high, sweet voice that the neighbors, hearing her, wagged their heads and their tongues. "Dolly isn't breaking *her* heart,

anyway," they said. But Dolly's mother watched her daughter out of the corner of her eye anxiously.

One clear, cold day about two weeks after the caucus, young Sam McNab was standing moodily in front of the blacksmith's shop in Sweet Valley, when Old Man John Barton, driving past in his sleigh, stopped and beckoned. Sam crossed the road slowly. He was in no humor for conversation with any one, and felt a dread of being called to order by the Old Man.

He was greeted with affectionate geniality.

"Sammie, seems to me the bolt that holds the shaft on this side is loose," the Old Man said. "I wish you would be so good as to look at it for me. I am pretty stiff these cold days, to be climbing in and out of the sleigh."

As Sam stooped in front of the dashboard, the Old Man leaned forward and spoke, close to his ear, in a hoarse whisper:

"Dolly is going out to Dakota to her Uncle Cotner. Starts to-morrow morning. Her trunk was sent down to the Flowerville

station this afternoon. Made up her mind all of a sudden, and none of us can stop her. Dakota is a long way off. No use of her going way out there; Philadelphia or Washington, D. C., would do better—for a wedding trip.”

Sam stood up suddenly, with his face much redder than his labors over the bolt warranted. The Old Man was looking steadily at the weather-vane on Squire Yorkes's barn.

“I shall not be surprised if we have more snow when the weather moderates. There are indications,” he observed casually. “The bolt is all right, is it, Sammie? I am obliged to you, sir. Your Grandmother Edgar was my first sweetheart, Sammie—as fine a woman as ever trod God's footstool! You favor her somewhat, upon my word you do! Good-by, my boy, good-by.”

Shortly after dusk that evening young Sam, driving rapidly down the creek road, met John Penny and his wife headed toward the village. The young man chuckled as he passed their sleigh. He unbuttoned his overcoat with one hand, that he might

finger a neatly folded paper in his vest pocket. Since that far-off, happy time before his father entered upon the troublesome paths of politics, he had carried that marriage license in the same pocket with Dolly's rejected ring; now he intended to put them both into use.

The square white house in the lane looked dark and forbidding. There was no response to Sam's eager knock. Deepwaterites seldom lock their front doors, and the young man walked boldly into the dimly lighted hall, that had not been graced by his presence for nearly a month.

"Dolly! Dolly!" he called imperiously.

There was no answer, no light form rustling to greet him. Perhaps the Old Man was mistaken, perhaps she had already gone. Overcome by a sudden sense of the emptiness of the house, of the village, of the universe, without Dolly, Sam bowed his head against the wall and groaned aloud.

"Dolly, I'll follow you to China!" he cried in his longing.

"Not China; Dakota," Dolly prompted on the stairs, half-laughing, half-crying,

and clinging to the balustrade, because she could not keep from trembling so foolishly.

Sam bounded up two steps at a time to meet her, and—well, there was no politics between them then.

When Mr. and Mrs. John Penny returned from town, no loving daughter answered their call. Spread out in front of the lamp on the sitting-room table, they found this remarkably explicit letter:

“DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER:

“I have gone off to get married. I did not really want to go to Dakota, anyway. Now that we've made up, Sam does not want to wait for fear we quarrel again. We are going to Philadelphia and Washington, the same as we planned at first. Isn't it lucky that all my wedding clothes are in my trunk at the station? I hate to go without saying good-by to you, but Sam is afraid Elder Minter may go to bed before we get there. You will not be very mad, will you, *please?*

“Your affectionate and dutiful daughter,
“DOLLY.”

Across the bottom of the sheet was scrawled in a large, masculine hand:

“It's all right, father-in-law. We will

have the supervisorship in the family at any rate."

Mr. and Mrs. John Penny were not "very mad." The mother cried a little and laughed a little.

"I do hope she put on her arctics, and took my double blanket shawl. It is so bitter cold," she said.

"I reckon they'll not mind the cold," John Penny observed. "Did you put the cat in the cellar, Almira?"

Ten days later Mr. and Mrs. Samuel McNab, Junior, returned from their wedding trip, and rode up from the Flowerville station in the Sweet Valley stage. Ben Lemon, the stage-driver, greeted them hilariously. "Hello, Supervisor!" he shouted, slapping Sam staggeringly on the back. Sam, being engaged in tucking the robes about Dolly in the sled, paid little attention to the form of salutation.

A mile or so outside of the town, two Deepwater men passed the stage in a sleigh, lifting their hats to the bride, and calling back something about "election" and "clean sweep."

"As I'm a sinner, yesterday was election day!" exclaimed Sam. "I forgot it clean as a whistle, Dolly; didn't you?"

But Dolly only laughed, with her cheeks like red, red roses.

"Say, Ben, how did the election go off?" Sam called to the driver.

They were starting up the Hill, so Ben twisted the lines about the whipstock, and turned to face his two passengers.

"Well," he drawled, "Ike Bender was elected squire, Dave McElroy school-director, Dan Hess——"

"Yes, yes, of course! But how about supervisor?"

"Well, you folks are getting back just in time for the big celebration the Bartons are getting ready for at the Old Man's."

"Then my pa was elected!" exclaimed Dolly.

"No-ope, not John Penny; he's going to take a rest from supervising, and let the Hill have a chance to show itself."

"Then *my* pa was elected!" laughed Sam, squeezing Dolly's hand until she shrieked softly.

"No-o-pe, not your pop either."

"Then who in thunder? Excuse me, Dolly!"

The old stage-driver smacked his lips with enjoyment.

"Well, you see, there was dissatisfaction about John Penny havin' the office agin, and they did say it was through the excitement of little Johnnie's fight that he got the nomination, so both sides, Hillers and Valley-ites, got together, and seein' the Bartons wouldn't come over to the other candidate, they all agreed to consolidate, as Old Man Barton called it, on a new man, and, gosh all, if he wasn't elected unanimous—yes, siree, u-nanimous. Eh? Who? Well, his name is S. McNab, Junior, known as young Sam—son of one retired candidate and son-in-law of t'other. *Gee up* there, Fan!"

CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA

CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA

A NEBRASKA STORY

BY GEORGE BEARDSLEY

“**W**HY certainly I’ll dubate with him of course why not, do you see ; Why looky here blank blankit if he wants to dubate with me why in blank blank shouldn’t I give him the chance, do you see ;”

The speaker was Bobbie Grant, Populist candidate for the Legislature. He spoke very fast, in the high-keyed voice common to a class of rural Nebraskans, without punctuation until the end, where he turned the interrogation point upside down after his inevitable “do you see ;”

“That’s all right, Bob,” said Smith, the Fusionist county chairman, a little one-eyed old Mormon, with a quaver in G, and a

stout cane. "I admire your nerve, Bobbie, and all that; but Port Ricker's a lawyer, you want to remember, and a skilled debater; and, on top of that, he's unscrupulous, as everybody knows."

"'Aw, skiltt your left eye-winker! And as for unscroopolous what the divvel has that got to do with it when I've got the right on my side, do you see?"—the farmer smote the air—"and most of the brains and the substance and the hard work of Nebraska at me back, do you see? Never you worry, old man, I reckon I'll have to do more or less of the give and take kind o' spoutin' up at Lincoln when I'm elected, and it's as well if I get some practice this side the Roobicon, which is the North Platte, do you see?"

"But you're as good as elected now, Bobbie, my man. You've everything to lose and nothing to gain."

"Well blank blankit I don't stand on that for a minute, blank blanked if I do. If our side's right, blank blankit, it'll win, spite o' dubates, grasshoppers, the divvel and the long drouth itself, do you see? And *what's* more"—the candidate riveted the watery

glance of the politician with his own honest eyes—"and *what's* more, me friend, Bobbie the Populist, blank blankit, is not the man to be afeared to stand up for what he represents, do you see? Why of course, yes indeed, I'll meet him, and so help me Bryan I'll not make any mistake, do you see?"

The emphatic Scotchman's primitive trust in the strength of his cause had convinced more pertinacious minds than that of the county chairman.

"Well, well—as you will, Bobbie," said that official. "It's yourself that's running, to be sure; and, if you choose to accept the challenge, why, I say go in and wipe up the Platte Valley with him. How's your folks, now, Bob?"

The reply came in an altered, lower tone, with a note of anxiety.

"Only toler'ble, no more'n toler'ble, I might say, Joe, thank you. As you know, the woman's ailin' consider'ble this fall—rheumatiz and such; and here lately it's 'fected her lungs. It was her account, as you know, I missed the meetin' at the Crick last week."

"Well, don't worry on that score; our fences are all right out that way."

The husband paid no attention to the political remark.

"She ought to have let up on the work long 'go," he said, "but my g-goodness, she's that sot she just couldn't stop workin'. But good-day to you, Joe. You can arrange the deetails of that dubate—any way suits me only say, put it the last day 'fore election—grand climax, you know; make it a sort o' picnic for the folks—they mostly need it, workin' as they are night and day with the corn and the stock, do you see?"

The candidate hurried off before the manager had time to object to this most dangerous of all dates for what he considered a dangerous joint debate. But he reflected that all his efforts to make the farmer candidate see the wisdom of tactical politics had been breath wasted, and so he went forthwith and accepted the challenge officially.

You may be sure the challenger made no objection to the date so innocently suggested by his adversary. The debate was fixed for the very last afternoon before the

election, at Platteville, and out of doors if the weather should permit. Ricker, the lawyer candidate, hugged himself with surprised delight when he learned that his loaded gauntlet was taken up so unsuspectingly. "Why, I'll make such a monkey of Bob," he chuckled at headquarters, "there won't be a jack-rabbit in the county but will be ashamed to vote for him next day."

All the particulars were arranged, and Platteville and the country round billed accordingly. Half-sheet posters in gorgeous red and green types announced:

UNPRECEDENTED POLITICAL FORENSICS!
POPULIST-REPUBLICAN JOINT-DEBATE.

HON. PORTER RICKER

vs.

HON. ROBERT GRANT,

Opposing Candidates for the Legislature,

AT

PLATTEVILLE (COTTONWOOD GROVE),

MONDAY BEFORE ELECTION, 2 P. M.

Special Rates on the U. P.

BRING YOUR DINNERS AND YOUR LADIES,

AND

HEAR BOTH SIDES!

COME ONE!

COME ALL!

Then the campaign waxed warm. Ricker, the lawyer, spoke twice a day—afternoon meetings at outlying crossroads (your simon-pure farmer will not come to an evening meeting, as every political manager knows)—evenings in the towns. The prospect of a tongue-to-tongue set-to with his inexperienced antagonist at the critical moment put him in fine fettle. He went about with the air of confidence and good cheer of a man who expects to win. Sometimes, when his audience was one-sidedly cordial to his speech, he would throw out little daring prognostications of how he would carry the enemy's works by storm on the next to the last day. "Come and see the fun!" he shouted, and the good-natured rustics grinned and cheered and led him on. If his spirits were extremely high, perhaps he would throw reserve to the winds and troll out jauntily—

Went to the animal fair,
All the Pops were there;

and he and everybody laughed boisterously over the conjured scene of Bobbie's rhetorical discomfiting, and the exposé of his Ar-

cadian unfitness for the office of legislator to the mighty interests of Nebraska.

Bobbie, meanwhile, pursued the even tenor of his own campaign. As the weeks sped and the days before the "big dubate," as he called it, became few, and he heard of Ricker's boasts, he was not disconcerted. He was the same emphatic, profane, genial Bob. "Are you shiverin', Bob?" a member of his audience called up to him once. "Pshaw! don't be silly," said Grant; "why in—" he checked himself—"why should a fellow shiver? There's nought but one side to this thing, as it happens, and that's the side we happen to stand on, do you see?" He had trained himself to leave off the blankity-blanks in his public speeches; but the "do you see" if he was momentarily off his guard, stuck, and, I think, lost him no votes. He, like Ricker, as epilogue to his speech these last days and nights, invited his hearers to come to the "big dubate," but he never permitted himself to be drawn into any boast that he would have the advantage. Some one asked from the crowd: "What you goin' do to him, Bobbie?" and the hirsute Bobbie looked bland and replied,

"Why, haven't you heard? it's a joint debate—stand up and knock down argufying, half-hour rounds, do you see?—come, and bring the women and the babies!" And the women agreed that Bobbie Grant did have a "way with him."

But these final days, those close to Grant when the meetings adjourned marked the disappearance of the confident look, and the coming in its place of a worried expression and a glance less stout-hearted. "How is the woman to-day, Bob?" they would ask sympathetically, and the big fellow answered only by a slow, solemn shake of the head.

"First time I ever seen Bob when he wasn't cock-sure, dead certain, and blankity-blank blank about a thing, do you see?" said Somerville, the wag, aside.

The afternoon of Monday, the fifth, the day before election, was crystalline. The November sun seeped through the rifts of the cottonwood trees, warming the air to a sparkling tonic, so that it was like a perfectly mellowed wine. The farmers and small merchants and their families assembled in holiday spirits. Old men were seen

arguing the issue earnestly with their brawny sons; wives sought to convince other wives; sweethearts in self-conscious white shoes bandied the ball of debate, and opposition babes cooed and crowed at one another over their mothers' shoulders.

Two o'clock came, and the meeting was not called to order. The minutes slipped by and the murmur was passed round that one of the speakers was late. At 2:30 the party managers and the vice-presidents of the meeting, the chairman, and one of the candidates climbed the flag-crowned creaking platform gingerly. Voices everywhere demanded, "Where is Bobbie Grant?" Somerville, the wag, cried, "Bobbie's turned up missin'," and there was a laugh. Populist faces grew long and those of the opposition triumphant.

"Backed down!" hazarded a fellow nobody knew, evidently from the marches. Half-Rome frowned, the other Half-Rome cheered at first, and then thought better of it and smothered the cheer. The chairman of the meeting used his gavel.

"So far," said he, "Mr. Grant has not put in an appearance. He is doubtless de-

tained unavoidably. As for backing down, I think I may say that no one who has even so much as a bowing acquaintance with a single hair of Bobbie Grant's whiskers would dream of hinting at such a thing."

The entire audience cheered. The chairman was the Platteville patriarch, beloved of all, and was known as a pronounced enemy of what he called the Don Quixote school of bewhiskered politics; so that his defense of the absent candidate was especially gratifying as a piece of fair play. Ricker, the lawyer, who sat on the stage complacently twirling his black mustache, cheered with the loudest of them. One of his trump cards was the admission of his opponent's solid human traits; he was content to argue that these alone could not make a statesman. His friends now called him to his feet. He responded gracefully, beginning by saying that he would be the most disappointed man on the ground "if Bobbie didn't show up." A voice: "What were you goin' to do to him, Port?" "Oh, nothing much," came the ready answer from the speaker. The

crowd applauded, and he added rather importunately:

“In fact, I didn’t intend to do a thing to him.”

At this went up a howl of delight, which, however, was not general. Bobbie’s friends began to drop away from the edges of the gathering, then rapidly the meeting passed into the hands of the other side. The lawyer candidate launched into his set campaign speech. Smith, the Fusionist county chairman, tried to interrupt him to say that a messenger had been dispatched on horseback to Mr. Grant’s house, but the audience jeered and yelled, “Sit down, Smith!”

The next thirty minutes were about the longest one-half of that multitude had ever waited out. Drifting from the crowd, they met in knots of eight and ten about the grove to discuss in low, serious voices the surprising turn affairs had taken.

“It will kill him at the polls,” said many.

“It will,” others assented, “unless he explains mighty handily, mighty soon.”

“I bet his woman’s worse,” guessed one man.

"I expect; she's been right poorly here lately."

Here and there a man speculated that perhaps, after all, it was best for Bobbie that he had stayed away. "Port's a powerful sharp 'un." But the farmer's backers would hear no apology for their favorite; they were as sure he would have come off with glory if he had met the appointment as they were that he was staunch to the last and that his absence would be well accounted for.

At length the messenger was descried returning down the road full gallop. While they waited impatiently the countrymen made small wagers on the character of Bob's explanation.

"Bet a heifer it's his woman." The odds were four to one that Bob's "woman" had had a "sudden turn." They gathered about the messenger as he rode up, demanding to know his news. But this the young man refused to disclose to any but his chief, Chairman Smith of the Fusion organization. To that little man on the platform he elbowed his way with some difficulty, and there was

a whispered report lasting some seconds. The audience fidgeted and coughed through the awkward suspense. Ricker had politely left off speaking when the courier arrived, and he, too, looked around quizzically to Smith for the expected explanation. When the ex-Mormon arose you could have heard a pin drop. Smith was no hand at public speaking, and wisely made short shrift of the intelligence he had to impart.

"The simple fact is, ladies and gentlemen," said he, coming forward, "Mr. Grant is staying at home with his wife.

. . . No, she is not worse—at least, he doesn't say she is worse—but she is poorly, very poorly, as we know, and it turns out that this is her birthday. Bob says he never once thought about the day before election being the fifth of November, or of course he would not have agreed to this date for the debate, much less suggested it himself. He further says that to-day, with all their talk and thought in connection with the anniversary, he forgot all about the debate until the messenger arrived. He says that he has always made it

a rule to spend this anniversary by his wife's side, and could not think of leaving her now, especially as she is very sick. I may suggest that it will be hard for us to blame him when we consider that he probably feels this may be the last time they will celebrate his birthday together. Bob sends his apologies for disappointing the audience, his opponent and the officers of this meeting."

An uncertain silence followed the sensational announcement. The situation was unusual, and not what had been expected. When at length the stillness was broken, it was broken by none other than Ricker, the Republican candidate, and what he did was to nod his head in decided approval and set up a vigorous hand-clapping. The audience took the cue instantly, and cheer upon cheer went up for the devoted Bobbie, making an ovation such as few men are ever honored with in our matter-of-fact political life. Populists forgot they were Populists, and Republicans that they were Republicans; all joined together in unfeigned homage to the chivalry of the absent candidate.

After the demonstration the meeting quickly dissolved. The people appeared quite to have transcended political matters. Neighbors who had begun the afternoon with bandying the thread-worn arguments of the campaign now exchanged kindly greetings in modulated voices. Pairs of sweethearts drove away with subdued glances to be by themselves. Good wives had tender words and inquiries for good wives, and the children nestled sleepily amid the straw in the wagons. The "big dubate" was a thing of the past. The teams rattled off along the road, separated at the forks, and scattered homeward over the prairie.

The following winter, in the halls of legislation at the State Capitol, one of the notable figures among the new members was a very tall, broad-shouldered, Scotchman with attenuated whiskers, who wore a wide black band around his hat. His fellow members listened respectfully when he addressed the House—which, however, was not often—and, when they approached,

spoke to him with awed voices, remembering the story that had gone the rounds in the lobby and the committee rooms of the member from Vista's joint-debate.

A TEMPERANCE CAMPAIGN

A TEMPERANCE CAMPAIGN

BY G. K. TURNER

JUST before the municipal campaign the local papers all printed this pathetically innocent little item on one and the same morning:

“The Ward 7 Republican Club held a large and enthusiastic meeting last night, and organized for the campaign as follows: President, G. B. Shaw; Secretary and Treasurer, J. Moody Morgan. It was unanimously voted to support all regular Republican nominees.”

This was brought up into the offices by no less authority than the President himself, accompanied by the Secretary-treasurer.

“Here’s something for you to put in in the morning,” said the President to the political reporter. “Say, you ought to been

up there. It was a great show. We're goin' to have a rouser this fall. It's goin' to be a great year with us, sure. The boys are all red-hot; eh, Mood?"

"Yep."

"You bet they are. Well, say, I won't take any more of your time, but just shove that in in the mornin', will you? We'll keep you posted when we've got anything more. Ta-ta," said the President, sailing cheerfully out the door.

"Well—see you later," ejaculated the Secretary-treasurer, seriously following after his superior officer, his eyes fixed on the floor.

The President of the Ward 7 Republican Club was a short, vivacious, alert young man, with a florid taste in neckties and trousers, a red-brown derby with a slight but unmistakable tendency to rake over his left ear, and a personal preference for bright yellow shoes. He was rigidly erect, his short coat was buttoned tightly around him, and his hair conformed to the highest ideals of the Ward 7 barber. He had quite the grand air with a cigar. He was extremely

social. In the hearts of his fellow-wards-men he was ever Birdie Shaw.

The Secretary-treasurer was a tall, dark, deep-eyed man, with glasses—a far, mysterious intelligence, expressed to the world through a few melancholy monosyllables and a sad, innocent smile. His clothes were loose and uncertain, and when he smoked a cigar, it continually went out. In the Ward he was popularly known as “The Ghost.” The two were never apart during a political campaign. It was clear to the most superficial that here was an ideal union of the man of thought with the man of action.

Once outside, the President and the Secretary walked seriously together under the electric lights.

“Well, do they use it?” said the latter.

“Sure, sure,” said the President, “they’ll use it.”

Ward 7 was the center of all municipal campaigns. The people of the city fondly imagined that they settled their own questions by popular vote, but in the last analysis everything depended on Ward 7. It decided nominations and elections; issues

and principles and men came before it to be passed upon. Now it would be folly for us to believe that this grand truth was hidden from the wise founders and builders of the Ward 7 Republican Club.

A casual observer might have expressed surprise on seeing, on the following evening, the Ward 7 Republican Club in full and harmonious session gathered at its headquarters. On first sight this headquarters would have seemed to be a bedroom; in fact, it *was* a bedroom—the room of Birdie Shaw over the Half-Dime Lunch. The two chairs of the bedroom set were occupied by the full membership of the Ward 7 Republican Club. Unknown to the world this unique organization was limited to a club who had authorized themselves to stimulate, to gather, to have and to hold, and finally to divide all contributions, revenues, and accruements of any kind whatsoever which could in any way be made the property of this remarkable institution.

The simplicity and strength of this masterful idea, originating in the brain of J. Moody Morgan, and now being executed by

Birdie Shaw, will be appreciated by all true students of American ward politics. Its formal announcement in the papers was the first move in the grand campaign which it was about to inaugurate.

The Club was now met for serious discussion of the effect of this first official act. The Secretary-treasurer broke silence.

"Did it work?" he inquired anxiously.

"Sure, sure," said the President; "we've got 'em thinkin'. I had more'n fifty fellers speak to me about it. They saw it in the newspapers. Oh, that scheme of yours is all right. We'll keep workin' the papers; that's the thing."

"Not too much, though."

"No, that's right; just enough. Oh, I'm all right with those fellers, I'll fix 'em. You just watch me."

The President leaned his chin on the back of the chair he was straddling. The supreme question was about to be propounded.

"Well, then," said he, "what is there in it this trip? Got it figured out?"

"Yep."

"What is it?"

"Temperance."

"Well, how'll we work it? Same old thing? Saloon-keeps' Association?"

"Yes, and something else."

"What is it? Have it out."

"Perkins."

"What, old Perk, the meat man?"

"Yep. Perkins and the Temperance Home Defenders outfit. Now I'll tell you how," said "The Ghost." He proceeded to elaborate his scheme.

"That's the stuff," said the President ecstatically. "Perkins is our man. We won't forget the saloon-keeps either; we'll work both ends. But it'll be mostly Perkins and the cold-water cranks. We'll get them first, and we'll start right off now."

Observe, then, Perkins, the rich wholesale meat man, and the Temperance Home Defenders marked for destruction or tribute, with Birdie Shaw starting out boldly on their trail, armed with a great cigar.

Mr. Elijah S. Perkins was a force—in business, in the home, in church, in temperance. When he believed a thing, he felt himself justified in demanding that all the

rest of mankind should believe it with him or be exterminated. But outside of the wholesale meat business, his soul was largely confined to the Cause of Temperance. His Neal Dow cold-water fountains for man and beast irrigated the whole county; he gave munificent prizes for the youth of the city to express their solutions of the temperance question in essays and declaim them to a waiting world.

It was only by the use of the utmost tact and diplomacy that the President of the Ward 7 Republican Club was able to penetrate to the inmost business lair of this great man. When he was at last admitted, he was confronted sternly with the bushy eyebrows and furrowed front of Elijah S. Perkins in business hours.

"Morning," grunted the great Perkins.

"Howdy do?" said Birdie Shaw cheerfully. "This is Mr. Perkins, ain't it? Well, I'm glad to see yer. My name's Shaw—George B. Shaw. You don't know me, but I know you; I don't have to tell yer that."

"Well," said the affable Perkins, "what can I do for *you*?"

"Well, then, Mr. Perkins, you ain't no

ordinary man; you've got things waitin' for you. I know that. I want just five minutes to talk temperance to you. It won't take you any longer. You're a practical man, and I want to talk the thing over the way practical men talk."

Mr. Perkins grunted again.

"Now, here," said Birdie Shaw, laying his finger confidentially on his coat collar, "I'm President of the Ward 7 Republican Club, and we've got the finest little club in this city, if I do say so. It ain't so little neither, unless you call a hundred and seventy-five husky young fellers little. Say, and they're all workers, too.

"Now you know and I know what Ward 7 is. I tell you this town'll come pretty near goin' the way Ward 7 goes—and don't you think it won't. It always has, and you and I won't live to see the time when it won't.

"Well, then," continued Birdie Shaw, in the deepest of confidential tones, "on the quiet, our fellers don't like the way this liquor business 's been goin'. There's lots of good young fellers that ain't no better for it. You know that." Elijah S. Per-

kins nodded solemnly. "And I tell you they're gettin' kind of tired of it—of seein' these liquor dealers lollin' round with their horses and carriages, and they scratchin' hard to pay the rent. Oh, I tell you, Mr. Perkins, things are advanced from what they used to be. Those fellers can see through a pane of glass just as well as you and me."

"True, true," said Elijah S. Perkins.

"So they got talkin' it down in the Club, and I says to 'em, 'If you mean business the man you want to see about this is Elijah S. Perkins. He is the temperance movement in this town.' So they sent me up to see you."

Again the great Perkins nodded.

"And now I'm goin' back and I'm goin' to tell the fellers that your people'll stand by 'em, and 'll be glad to have 'em come in with you. Is that right?"

"That's right, my boy," said Perkins heartily. "The temperance cause is the place for young men. You tell 'em I'm glad to see our young men gettin' their eyes open."

"Will they be glad to hear it?" said Mr. Shaw. "Well, I guess *not*."

Jumping from his chair, he shook the great temperance leader by the hand and escaped. The two new friends parted in the deepest mutual confidence.

Emerging from the office of the great Perkins, the leader of Ward 7 young men started down into the city with a look of deep determination on his face. There was still work to be done. He was, in fact, headed for the Secretary of the Meadville Liquor Dealers' Protective Association.

Mr. P. Hickey, the Secretary of this high moral organization, was a rotund, middle-aged gentleman, with a smooth-shaven face, embossed with a large and meaty nose. He was ornamented with a very heavy gold watch chain, and a shirt front displaying a small bow tie and a great electric diamond. His sleek hair and his expanse of white linen gave him an uncanny appearance of cleanliness.

Birdie Shaw discovered him in the glass-lined private office of his saloon.

"Hello, Hick," he said, seating himself.

"Hello, Bird," growled the fat liquor dealer, "what ails yer now?"

"Say, Hick, what are you goin' to do for us this fall?" returned the visitor.

"Do for what?"

"The Club down in the Ward, of course."

"You're President of it, ain't yer?"

"Yep."

"I thought I saw something about it in the paper. Well, we'll treat you all right."

"You'd better. The fellers are all friendly to you now, and you want to keep 'em that way, 'cause you're goin' to have the fight of your life on your hands this fall.

"Say," said the President, lowering his voice to a hoarse whisper, "there's temperance money comin' into the ward in bunches and I know the fellers that's got it. Oh, I'm onto 'em; I know all their little tricks. This feller thinks he's all right, too. He comes to me and he says, 'We've got 'em this time, sure thing.' So I says to meself, 'I'll just go up and see my old friend Hick and put him onto this right off now.'"

Mr. P. Hickey nodded with serious appreciation.

"Well, that's all," said Mr. Shaw, rising. "But say now, you want to do the right thing by our fellers this fall. It won't do you no harm; I'll tell you that."

"Don't you worry; we'll take care of 'em," said the liquor man. "Better have something before you go. Here," he called to the bartender, as Birdie Shaw emerged, "you give this man what he wants."

For a temperance worker Mr. Shaw wanted pretty strong stuff.

He had scarcely come out on the sidewalk, when he encountered the political reporter.

"Hello, Shaw," said the latter, "what's new to-day?"

"There's something comin' along," said Birdie hesitatingly, "but I don't know as it's just ripe to give out yet."

"Oh, go on, tell us," said the reporter. "What is it?"

"Well, here," said Bird, finally overcoming his scruples. "I'll give you a pointer, and you can work it out for yourself. This is goin' to be a red-hot campaign for tem-

perance. The Christians are out after the saloon-keepers with an ax. After this election they say when a man wants a drink, he's got to take a train to get it. That's right, too; you can put that down.

"Oh, it'll be a great fight. And say, while you're at it, you might say that Ward 7 talked over the temperance question at its last meeting. Oh, I'm tellin' you, it was a lively one at that. Some of the fellers are sore on the saloon gang, and you can't tell what they're liable to do.

"But don't give it away where you got this. If you do, you won't get any more news from me, I'm tellin' you that."

The "Morning Standard" announced the approaching temperance warfare at length.

Having launched the temperance campaign, its originators were concerned that it should be run on proper lines. There was at once great enthusiasm with Elijah S. Perkins and his friends, and great anxiety among the followers of P. Hickey. The city had always gone "license" by a very small margin.

The solicitude of the officers of the Ward

7 Club was naturally greatest for making a proper impression on Mr. Perkins. With this in view, it was decided to inaugurate a new movement. This was nothing less than to run Mr. Perkins for Mayor.

Immediately upon this decision the Ward 7 Republican Club was to be seen gathered at the desk of Elijah S. Perkins—the President boldly gesticulating; the Secretary-treasurer dangling his black hat between his legs in an uneasy way, and staring innocently into the other corner of the room through his spectacles.

The President had soon come to the point. "Now look here," he said, "I'll give it to you straight, without any foolin'. Our fellers want you for Mayor. Now, you needn't say no; they won't take it. You're a popular man down in our ward, if I do say it to your face."

"That's right," jerked out the taciturn Secretary-treasurer, blinking earnestly through his spectacles.

"Well, I should say it *was* right. You ought to see 'em warm up to it. 'If he'll run,' they says, 'we'll give 'em a temper-

ance law, with a temperance Mayor to run it.' That's what this town needs; and you people won't get it unless you do run."

"Maybe you're right," said Mr. Perkins, modestly.

"Sure, sure," said the President, "and you're the man we want—we're all agreed to that, and we won't take no for an answer."

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Perkins, with his best air, "I will not say no; I will give the matter my attention."

The Ward 7 Republican Club bowed themselves out.

"Will he take it?" asked the Secretary-treasurer.

"Will he take it? Well, I should say he would," said the President gleefully. "You couldn't pry it away from him with a crow-bar."

On their next trip down street that evening, the two temperance workers did not avoid the blazing saloon of P. Hickey. They found the Secretary of the liquor dealers in the center of the glare, walking slowly about with his fat thumbs in the pockets of his tight trousers.

"Come in here," said the President of the Ward 7 Republican Club, jerking his head toward the glass-lined office.

"Say, Hick," he said, when they were duly caged, "I've got something new and novel for you. The cold-water workers have got a new candidate in the convention, and he's all right, too. They've got out old Perkins, the meat man."

"What er you givin' us?" grunted Hickey.

"Honest, that's right, every word of it; and he's goin' to give you fellers the fight of your life. There ain't no limit' to the money they're goin' to put into this thing; he's just crying to spend it.

"Now you've got that the first of anybody in this city. Only don't you say a word yet. You just wait and see if what I tell you ain't right."

The next morning the President of the Ward 7 Club, faithful to his trust, appeared again at Mr. Perkins's office.

There was still doubt in the great Perkins's mind.

"Here," said Mr. Shaw, finally, "I tell

you what I'm goin' to do. I'm goin' to get your name before the people, and you can see for yourself."

"How'll you do it?"

"Oh, I'll have to fix the papers a little."

"Fix the papers! Have you got to pay the papers to get political stuff in?"

"Got to fix the papers? Well, I should say you had. The trouble with you temperance people is, you're too innocent. You know what you can do with 'em. Well, you just watch me."

"What does it cost?" queried Perkins.

"Oh, you can get it done for twenty-five dollars—a good one, I mean."

"Well, here," said Perkins, "you try it."

"All right," said Mr. Shaw, "but I kind of hate to take this from you. I'd pay it out of the treasury of the Club—if I thought it was the right thing to do."

"Oh, that's all right," said the magnificent Perkins. "When Elijah S. Perkins does a thing, it's *done*; you'll find that out if you do much business with *me*."

Steering straight down street with his faithful fellow-officer, Birdie Shaw soon en-

countered the political reporter and assailed him with friendly vigor.

The reporter accosted him for news.

"Now look here," said Bird, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll tell you a piece of news that's right; and nobody else ain't got it but you, and they won't have it neither—not till after you print it. They're goin' to run old Perkins for the nomination for Mayor."

"What, Elijah S. Perkins!" gasped the reporter.

"Yes, sir; that's right. Sure as God made the Irish. There's a strong movement for him, and you'll have that first. I'll guarantee you that. Only give him a kind of a good send-off, will you?"

"And say, you might say the Ward 7 Club had another big meetin' last night and voted in six new members. Oh, they're red-hot."

The political reporter went away and wrote an article full of enthusiasm. It was a "scoop."

The political reporter's friendship was established for one fall; Perkins was grati-

fied; and the twenty-five dollars remained in the treasury of the Ward 7 Club. Thus all were pleased.

There was no doubt that the announcement made a stir. Delight suffused the temperance ranks, and much consternation the souls of the Liquor Dealers' Association.

Possibly this event alone would have been enough to fix in the breast of that citizen-patriot, Elijah S. Perkins, the determination to sacrifice himself for his city. However, the President of the Ward 7 Club would leave no stone unturned.

He next visited the President of the Women's Temperance Home Defenders, Mrs. Jabez O. Pratt. He found her in a church vestry at the close of one of the Defenders' afternoon meetings.

"Excuse me, Mrs. Pratt," he said "for intrudin' myself on you. But I knew you and I wanted the same thing—we want Elijah S. Perkins for Mayor of this city.

"Now, what I want is for you to tell him so. You can make him do a good many things other people can't. You want to ex-

plain to him just how the thing is. We temperance people have got to have him to win."

"I'll do it," said the head of the Defenders, decidedly.

"Well, thank you, ma'am," said Birdie Shaw. "I won't take any more of your time then."

The President of the Defenders was a tall, unhealthy-looking woman, with a bluish-white complexion. She wore a black dress and black cotton gloves, and a little flimsy black cape that huddled up about her neck.

"That's a smart young man," she said to herself, as Birdie Shaw sailed away.

Mrs. Pratt started immediately for Mr. Perkins. She was an earnest woman—one of those strong personalities who take a personal pride in speaking their opinion, and make fully as much display of moral courage in doing it when it happens to be good as when it is bad.

She entered the office of the great Perkins with a flourish, and started immediately on her God-given task of speaking her mind.

"I don't care, Mr. Perkins," she said, "if you are a big, rich man, and I'm only a poor, hard-workin' woman. I'm just going to tell you what I think, and it won't make any difference to me whether you like it or not.

"You've got to run for Mayor of this beautiful city; she needs you. You've had all the expenses of the Cause all these years, and now you ought to have some of the honors of it, and everybody I've talked to says the same. The people are aroused this fall; they're going to elect a temperance mayor, and you're going to be the man."

Her visit, with that of other devoted and unselfish enthusiasts, went far to demonstrate to Mr. Perkins how widespread was the call for him through the city.

The same evening of these two conferences, the Secretary of the Liquor Dealers' Association was met by the President of the Ward 7 Club.

"Hello, Hick," said Bird, "how are you to-night?"

"All right. How's yourself?"

"First rate. Well, say, Hick, was I right about Perkins, or wasn't I?"

"Guess you hit it that time."

"You bet your life I did. Well, say, have you got it all fixed up what you're goin' to do for us?"

"I dunno but what I have."

"Well, you'd better; with all this temperance money floatin' round I'm havin' all I can do keepin' the fellers in line this fall—and your people not doin' a thing yet. Say, Hick, you'll have to raise it a little this fall, honest."

"A feller was in here last night," said Hickey stolidly, "who said that Perkins business was all a bluff."

"Oh, I dunno about that," said Birdie Shaw. "The old man might be weaker in the convention, and don't you forget it."

"This feller says," continued the liquor dealer unmoved, "that the whole show ain't got any chance, and he'd think we'd drop the whole thing, and save our money."

"Did you believe him?" asked Bird scornfully.

"I dunno but I did."

"That's all right," said the President of the Ward 7 Club fiercely, rising with sharp

decision from his chair. "You just go ahead and see what you can do without us."

"Say, here," said the Secretary of the liquor dealers, hurriedly, "don't get excited. I was only givin' you a little jolly. Here's the usual thing. I'll give it to you now, and maybe I'll raise you a little later. Does that suit you?"

"That's all right, Hick," said the mollified leader of Ward 7 voters; "I knew you'd behave sensible about it before you got through. Only you don't want to believe what everybody comes along and tells you."

Now the machine had already selected its man for Mayor weeks before, and Elijah S. Perkins had about as much chance against it as Mrs. Jabez O. Pratt herself. The more sane of his friends finally convinced him that it would, on the whole, be better to withdraw.

Birdie Shaw was one of the first to approach him after his decision. There was a deep and settled depression on his face.

"Our fellers will be mighty sorry to hear it, Mr. Perkins," he said. "But I'm goin'

to tell 'em the fight ain't off yet by any means. It ain't no personal matter with you. You're one of these men that's got principles, and there ain't any too many of 'em in politics, I'm tellin' you that. The principle of this thing's the same, and you're goin' to stick."

"Yes," said Perkins, feebly. "The principle's what I'm after."

It remained to announce Mr. Perkins's withdrawal to the public. To see that this was properly done Mr. Shaw himself went to the "Standard" office, and imparted the news exclusively to his dear friend, the political reporter.

It was a rich political year. The breweries put in to both parties their regular contributions—those great unseen moral forces, which always disappear in the report of expenses—divided under the names of a large number of friendly politicians, who never gave a cent in their lives. The saloons did likewise. The Ward 7 Republican Club, with touching self-sacrifice, made no attempt to share in the division of this spoil. It modestly preferred to keep away from

the attention of the general political managers.

It was with this self-effacing purpose that the chief executive of the Ward 7 Republican Club now sallied forth. In the Secretary of the Liquor Dealers' Protective Association he found an easy convert.

"Just you keep still and say nothin'," said Mr. Shaw, tapping the chest of Mr. Hickey with his forefinger. "It'll all be fixed. *You* don't want to get into this fight. You ain't in no position to in your business."

Incidentally Mr. Shaw wrapped up and put into his pocket the additional tribute of the liquor dealers.

The great Elijah S. Perkins he approached in a different way.

"It's a great temperance fight you're puttin' up, Mr. Perkins," said he. "I tell you it makes a difference who's runnin' such things."

"Well, I generally manage to do what I set out to," said the modest Perkins.

"Sure, sure. Everybody's talkin' of it. It's great."

"The saloon is the curse of this country," continued Mr. Perkins, didactically.

"Sure, sure."

"And we've got to stamp it out."

"That's right," said Birdie Shaw, fervently, "and you're the man to do it in this town."

"Say now," he continued, "I came up here to talk over Ward 7 with you and take your advice. Now, I tell you what I thought."

Mr. Shaw then spoke warmly in favor of allowing the women and clergymen to conduct an earnest and thorough campaign of education, but favored quiet work in Ward 7.

"You let your ministers and women loose on the city all you want to. It's a great thing in its way—great. I understand that. But you run Ward 7 yourself. This is your campaign; you're the man that's runnin' it; and that's the ward in this town, and we want it run right. Now every day or so I'll come up here and talk it over with you and get directions. What do you say? Am I right?"

Mr. Perkins was much pleased with the arrangement.

Mr. Shaw fulfilled his part of the contract to the letter. Day by day he reported the great growth of membership, and boldly told the high respect entertained for Mr. Perkins. "You'd be surprised to see what an influence you've got on those fellers," he confessed. "I'll bet there's more'n fifty good young fellers took the pledge in that Club since you first came in with us."

Mr. Perkins was touched by this recital. Shaw carried home a heavy burden of paper-covered literature.

"Look a-here, Mood," he wailed. "Get onto what he gave me!"

"What?"

"Little temperance lessons for the Club."

"Let's look at 'em," said the Secretary-treasurer, blinking over the titles through his glasses.

"Say," said Bird, picking one up, "listen to this: 'Business *vs.* Beer, by Elijah S. Perkins.'"

"That's it," said Mood, "work that."

It appeared on the next visit to Perkins

that the club members had been much impressed by the literature. "There's one thing there that hit 'em hard," said the President. "It's called 'Business *vs.* Beer,' or something like that. Say, who wrote that?"

"I did," said the author.

"Well, say," said the surprised Shaw, "it's all right, anyway. It's a good thing those books come in as they did, too."

Mr. Shaw then described vividly the efforts of the Liquor Dealers' Protective Association to debauch the young men from the paths of rectitude and Perkins.

"What!" said the great Perkins, bristling, "a gang of saloon-keepers banded together to intimidate the voters of this city?"

"That's right."

Mr. Perkins then demanded a detailed description of their methods and officers. He was particularly impressed by P. Hickey. His purpose became alarming; he threatened to seek out Mr. Hickey and defend the members of the Ward 7 Republican Club in person.

"When I see that fat rum-seller," he said

finally, "I'm going to speak my mind to him as an American citizen."

"Say, don't you think you'd better wait a while?" said the terrified Birdie Shaw.

"Am I goin' to run this thing, or ain't I?" asked the charming-mannered Perkins. "If I ain't, I want to know it."

Birdie Shaw retreated in dire fear, with the champion of Ward 7 young men still in a belligerent mood.

A great danger hung over the Ward 7 Club—the open discussion of it by its friends. Moreover, the days were growing few and the harvest was not yet.

At a serious conference of the organization, it was deemed wise to choose Mr. Perkins an honorary member.

"If that don't bring it," said the President, "we won't get it short of murder."

Mr. Shaw presented the honor with much feeling; Mr. Perkins appreciated it very much.

"There's enthusiasm in this campaign, everywhere," he said. "I tell you it's fine. We're goin' to win, and as far's I'm concerned, I ain't goin' to spare any expense

to do it. You tell your fellers I'm goin' down, and I'm goin' to get the finest crayon picture of myself in this town and send it down to 'em. When a thing like that's done to Elijah S. Perkins, he don't forget to show his appreciation of it."

"They'll be mighty glad to hear of it," said Birdie Shaw, looking cheerful by main strength.

There was truly no lack of heat in this no-license campaign, which the Ward 7 Republican Club had so ruthlessly awakened. The blast of the temperance emotionalist echoed through the overheated town; the cohorts of the saloon were working their insinuating wiles in the nether darkness of ward politics. Gray-faced women in black gowns—vestals of the Cause—went from door to door assailing the women in this wise:

"How would you like to have your darling boy wrecked by the Demon Drink? Well, then, if you wouldn't, make your husband vote against its being legally countenanced in our beautiful city. If you don't you're responsible for other women's sons."

Red-faced gentlemen, committed to the interests of the saloon, industriously inquired of the young men: "Say, are you goin' to let a lot of old women dictate what you're goin' to do?" But amidst it all—the clamor and turmoil and the dust—the high gods who laugh their fill annually over American politics were most moved by the sight of the great Elijah S. Perkins and the spectral Ward 7 Club still haunting the saloon side by side in Ward 7. Gaunt anxiety covered the officials of the Club like a garment. The end of the campaign was here, and the tremendous issue for which the Ward 7 Club was formed was still unsolved. A hundred hints—open, concealed, ingenious—had fallen flat. Their most heroic efforts to secure Perkins's financial contributions had been in vain.

"We're done," said the despondent President; "we're beat to a standstill."

Silence from the Secretary-treasurer.

"Well, what do you think, you undertaker's assistant?"

"Try him again."

"Got another scheme?"

"Yep."

"Well, then, what is it this time?"

"Anonymous letter."

"How's that?"

"Here," said "The Ghost," passing it over.

"What's this?" said Mr. Shaw, beginning to read. "Oh, yes."

"DEAR SIR: Probably you think you know all there is to this Ward 7 Club, but you don't. They're foolin' you. Take my advice. Ask Shaw how many debts they've got.

"A FRIEND."

"Understand?" asked "The Ghost."

"Wouldn't wonder if I did. We've got debts and Perkins pays 'em. That's it?"

Nod from the Secretary-treasurer.

"This letter starts the thing goin'."

Another nod.

"Perkins breaks loose again. Then there's where I come in and lay it out before him."

Nod.

The anonymous letter was posted by loving hands that night. The President of

the Ward 7 Club nerved himself for the final desperate attack.

As Birdie Shaw entered the silence of the awful office the succeeding morning, the roar of the cunning Perkins greeted him.

"You're the feller that thought you'd fool me," said the voice.

Mr. Shaw was stricken with surprise. "What do you mean, Mr. Perkins?"

"How about those debts of that Club of yours?"

"Say, what are you coming at?" said the innocent caller.

"You look at that," said Perkins, showing the letter in his face. "Oh, you can't fool me. I've got my ways of knowin'."

Mr. Shaw was almost speechless with rage.

"Lemme look at that!" he demanded, snatching it and devouring it with his eyes. His anger settled into a calm and deadly determination.

"That's all right," he said, passing it back.

"I know who that is, and he'll know who I am before this day's over. I'll leave my mark on him."

"Well," said the amiable Perkins, in a

loud, barking voice, "what have you got to say for yourself?"

"Well, say, here," said Mr. Shaw, throwing aside all attempt at concealment, and standing forth in absolute candor. "I tell you just how this thing is. Our Club's in debt—that's right—we've got all we want to carry. We're meetin' expenses for this campaign, understand, and it costs money to run a good fight. Well, then, all this fall these liquor men have been round tryin' to pay it, and we've fought 'em off. But a few of the fellers in the Club thought as long as we was goin' the other way, we'd ought to get some help out of the temperance people. They was goin' to have somebody tackle you—only a few of 'em, understand, not the whole Club.

" 'No, sir,' I says, 'we're doin' this thing ourselves, we ain't beggin'.' And we beat 'em out. I tell you it was red-hot. I told 'em what I thought of 'em. But afterwards I heard some of 'em said they was goin' to write you, anyhow.

"And that's what they've done," said Mr. Shaw, with a desperate gesture. "Say,

I'd rather been assassinated than had that happened."

"What's the reason you didn't want me to know about it?" asked the relenting Perkins.

"What's the reason? Well, here, I'll tell you that right off. Did I ever ask you for anything?"

Apparently negative grunt from Perkins.

"Did anybody else in that Club?"

Second grunt.

"No, nor I didn't intend they should. I know you; you're generous and big-hearted. The first thing you'd done, you'd wanted to pay off that debt.

"Well, you know it all now, and you can watch us payin' that debt off. It'll be worth it. We'll do it, too. That Club ain't goin' to break up this election either. It's goin' to keep right on. It's a good thing for those fellers, and I don't mean to have it stop."

"You look here!" burst forth Perkins.

"How much is that debt?"

"Oh, probably \$375, when everything's all in."

"That's all, is it?"

"Sure, sure, we've paid off some of it already."

"And you say you ain't goin' to let anybody else pay anything?"

"That's right."

"Well, now, you are!" said the tremendous Perkins, dragging the unwilling Shaw after him like a lamb to the slaughter, as he proceeded to work his awful will.

"You are! I'm goin' to pay it myself!"

"Say, here," said Mr. Shaw feebly, "I didn't come up here lookin' for this."

"You sit still right where you are," said the meat merchant, ringing a bell.

"Here you," he said to the cowering clerk who appeared. "You go out to the safe and get me \$400. Hear? I tell you *my* clerks don't wait around when I give 'em an order," he continued.

Beaten down and overcome with shame, Birdie Shaw left the office of the great Perkins with \$400 in his pocket.

"Did I get it?" he reported to his fellow-officer, waving a gigantic cigar gracefully towards the sky. "Well——"

But the troubles of the Ward 7 Club were not over yet. Mr. Perkins still threatened assault on sight on the person of Mr. Hickey.

"Say, if they get together," predicted Mr. Shaw, "they'll get to talkin' about us, sure. That's where we come to a close."

The opposing forces crashed up to their crisis in election day. It was a time to be remembered. The Ward 7 Republican leaders went in and out of the precincts of the ward and lingered earnestly about the ballot-boxes. The hours had passed without untoward incident; the dangers of the campaign were nearly over. Suddenly at the last moment there appeared on the horizon the two forces of danger moving from either direction. P. Hickey was driving his colt in his red-wheeled sulky; Elijah S. Perkins was advancing in a hack, accompanied by the President of the Women's Temperance Home Defenders. Both parties arrived at the curbing together.

"Take care there," yelled the fat liquor dealer; "look out where you're goin'."

The hack-driver hesitated. The intrepid

Perkins, seizing the situation, stuck his head out the window.

"You go ahead in there," he said; "never mind him. If he gets in your way drive over him."

P. Hickey, in his light vehicle, gave way, and swung out opposite Perkins in the carriage. The end was at hand; the two forces were joined; the very existence of the Ward 7 Republican Club was threatened. Its members on the curbstone waited in silent horror for the final blow.

"Say, who do you think you are?" asked the sweet-toned saloon-keeper.

"My name's Elijah S. Perkins, sir, if you want to know!" shouted the opposition.

"Well, Perkins, you want to be careful the way you drive round here. You can't run *me* down in the street."

"Who are you?"

"My name's Hickey. P. Hickey, that's who I am."

The worst was now known. Perkins was nearly inarticulate.

"Oh, you are, are you? You're Hickey,

the rum-seller, that's been bribin' and debauchin' the people of this town to vote for your filthy business. Say, you, I'd like to give you my opinion of you!"

"You would, hey?"

The heat of battle had reached the borderland of apoplexy on both sides. The loafers about the polls gathered close around to drink in the delights of this unexpected gladiatorial treat.

"You would, hey?" repeated Hickey. "Well, why don't you then?"

"Because I don't need to; the people of this town are goin' to show you by their votes what they think of you and your gang. When the good people of this town get roused, you can't buy 'em off with your dirty saloon money."

The aroused Celt began to speak in the bosom of P. Hickey. "Say, when it comes to spendin' money on elections, you're pretty good, ain't ye?" he remarked. "You don't want to be hollerin' round here too much, or somebody might be around that'll show you up. I s'pose you think because you've been fillin' every fist in town

full of money, every one else's been doin' the same."

"I don't need to spend money. The people of this city have decided for themselves."

"Aw, go on, you big, fat butcher, you."

"The trouble with you is," proceeded Perkins calmly, "you've lost your grip. You've lost the young men's vote—right here in this ward."

"See here, ye blaggard," said P. Hickey, descending with great care from his sulky, and giving charge of the horse to a small boy at its head, "I'll tell you what I'll do."

He had advanced to the hack and was shaking his unterrified Irish fist under the nose of the great Perkins.

"I'll bet ye fifty dollars we've got the young men of this Ward with us! Hey, there, you," he yelled to Birdie Shaw on the curbstone.

The representative of Ward 7 young men stood transfixed—held by heavy fear to the spot. The hour of desolation was at hand for the Ward 7 Republican Club.

Then it was that the beneficent influence

of woman intervened. P. Hickey, in his earnestness, stood close to the hack door. The two men glared at each other at short range.

"I'll show you," said P. Hickey, "I'll——"

All at once the President of the Home Defenders smelled the liquor on his breath.

"Mr. Perkins," she said with great dignity, "that individual is intoxicated. Do not pay any more attention to him; we cannot afford to demean ourselves by standing here in conversation with a drunken man. Drive me away from here—immediately!"

Her voice was rapidly rising. "I insist!" she cried. "Driver, go on immediately! And you," she said to Hickey, "if you have a spark of manhood left, you will leave that window now and at once!"

The hack-driver, turning about on his seat, slowly and doubtfully drove away; the influences of good were borne further and further away from the polls. The victorious Hickey stood triumphant, surrounded by admiring friends. Of all the rest, none

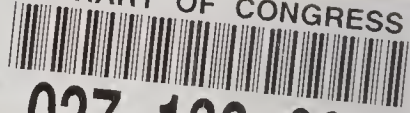
were so eager to congratulate him on his great moral victory as the officers of the Ward 7 Republican Club—after the temperance host had quite disappeared.

The polls were closed, the people of Meadville had registered another careful, thoughtful, uninfluenced, unprejudiced decision on municipal affairs. The temperance vote showed a slight suspicion of gain through the city. In Ward 7 it had jumped forward seventeen votes. Yet license, after all, prevailed.

The Ward 7 Republican Club encountered the reporter of the "Morning Standard," searching for the true interpretation of the vote.

"Say, here," said Shaw, "you're writin' up this thing? I'll tell it to you just as it is. You just say in writin' about Ward 7 that there was a good deal of liquor money spent there, but the temperance vote showed a gain. And say, never mind puttin' anything in about the Ward 7 Club; we've had enough advertisin' for one year."

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